



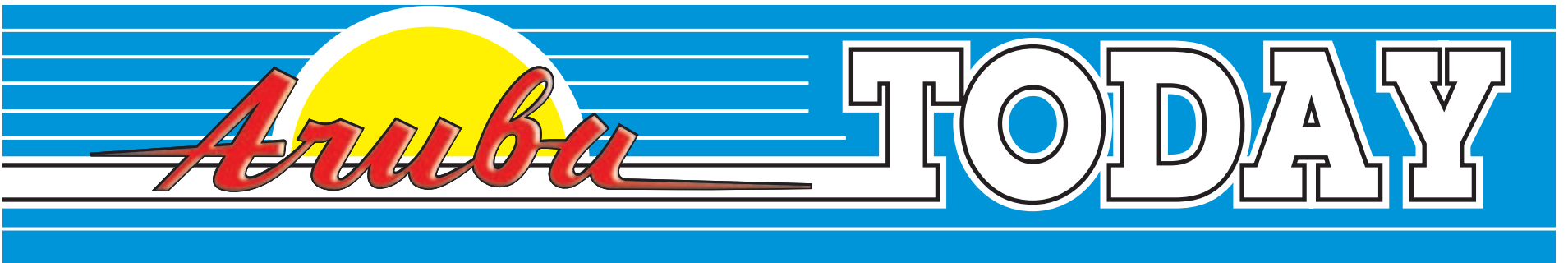
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On Top Of The News Email: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) website: [www.arubatoday.com](http://www.arubatoday.com) Tel: +297 582-7800 Friday, January 10, 2014



## Christie Fires Aide In Bridge Scandal; US Opens Inquiry

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie walks past reporters as he leaves City Hall Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014, in Fort Lee, N.J. Christie traveled to Fort Lee to apologize in person to Mayor Mark Sokolich. Moving quickly to contain a widening political scandal, Gov. Chris Christie fired one of his top aides Thursday and apologized repeatedly for the "abject stupidity" of his staff, insisting he had no idea anyone around him had engineered traffic jams to get even with a Democratic mayor.

(AP Photo/Louis Lanzano)

**William K. Rashbaum**  
© 2014 New York Times  
Gov. Chris Christie apologized to the people of New Jersey on Thursday, saying he was "embarrassed and humiliated" by revelations that a top aide and appointees ordered lane closings on the George Washington Bridge to deliberately snarl traffic as an act of

political vengeance. In a somber and humbling news conference in Trenton, Christie said he was "blindsided" when he learned of a series of emails that showed intimate involvement by close associates to punish a Democratic mayor who had declined to endorse the governor for his re-election.

Christie's comments came after weeks of steadfast denials by the governor that his administration was involved. "I am a very sad person today," he said. Just as the news conference began, the U.S. attorney's office announced that it would open a preliminary inquiry into the matter. The governor said

he fired his aide, Bridget Anne Kelly, a deputy chief of staff, whom he called "stupid" and "deceitful." Her deception led him to mislead the public, he said, but he did so unwittingly. "I am heartbroken that someone I permitted to be in that circle of trust for the past five years betrayed that trust," he said.

Christie said he had also asked his two-time campaign manager, Bill Stepien, to step down as a consultant to the Republican Governors Association and to withdraw his name from consideration to be the head of the state's Republican Party.

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## Discovery of bombs and corpses rattles Russia's tense North caucasus region

**ANDREW ROTH**

© 2014 New York Times

**MOSCOW** - The discovery of several improvised explosive devices and the bodies of six men shot dead put security forces on higher alert in Russia's North Caucasus region

has resulted in explosions and shootouts between outlaw gangs and local police forces almost daily. Sochi has largely been quarantined in advance of the games, closing its roads to vehicles from other parts of the country and mobi-

the victims.

The case comes as Russia is reeling from suicide bombings on a city bus and in the main railway station last month in the southern transport hub of Volgograd, which killed 34 and injured dozens more.



**An ambulance leaves the site of an explosion after a bomb blast tore through the trolleybus, background, in the city of Volgograd. A series of unexplained killings in southern Russia involving booby-trapped bombs has further heightened security fears ahead of next month's Winter Olympics in Sochi. A spokesman for Russia's main investigative agency, said in a statement that no motive had yet been found for this week's killings on the outskirts of Pyatigorsk, which is the center of an administrative district created in 2010 to coordinate efforts to combat the insurgency. (AP Photo/Denis Tyrin)**

Thursday and added new concerns about violence ahead of the Olympic Games planned for the nearby resort city of Sochi next month.

The police found the bodies of the men Wednesday in several abandoned cars near the city of Pyatigorsk in the Stavropol region, about 170 miles east of the Olympic site, and the explosives next to the cars, a law enforcement spokesman said. One of the devices detonated, and a bomb squad disarmed two more, he said.

No one was injured in the blast, he said, and it was not immediately clear whether the killings were intended as an act of terror or were connected to gangland-style violence. The Stavropol region borders several turbulent North Caucasus republics, where Russia is struggling to quell an Islamist insurgency that

lizing tens of thousands of government troops to ensure safety for visiting athletes and tourists.

The police said they were seeking three men from the neighboring Kabardino-Balkaria region in connection with the murders and "an attempt on the life of law enforcement officers," the Interfax news service reported, but did not immediately link the case to terrorism.

Vladimir Markin, the official spokesman for the Investigative Committee, the main national criminal investigative agency in Russia, said Thursday that investigators had not determined a motive for the attack.

State media, citing anonymous sources, reported that two of the murdered men were taxi drivers and a third worked as a furniture assembler. There was no official identification of

President Vladimir Putin vowed in a nationwide broadcast on New Year's Eve to "continue the confident, tough and ongoing fight against the terrorists until their total elimination." Investigators have not identified any suspects in the Volgograd bombings, and no terrorist group has taken responsibility for the attack. Violence in the region is often linked to Doku Umarov, a terrorist leader who encouraged supporters in an online video address to use "maximum force" to disrupt the games, which he called "satanic dancing on the bones of our ancestors." Aleksandr Zhukov, the president of Russia's Olympic Committee, told reporters after the Volgograd attacks that new steps to secure the Olympics would not be taken because "everything necessary has already been done." □

### **LATIN AMERICAN BRIEFS**

#### **Panama demolishes Noriega house**

**PANAMA CITY (AP)** — A bulldozer is demolishing a mansion once owned by former dictator Manuel Noriega, after the Panamanian government found no buyers for it. Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli said Thursday the rambling, weed-choked residence had become a breeding ground for mosquitoes, rats and other pests. The estate valued at \$2.5 million is in Panama City's posh San Francisco district, but a yearslong effort to sell it received no bids. Noriega was toppled by a 1989 U.S. invasion and served 17 years in the U.S. for drug trafficking.

#### **Funes: predecessor mismanaged funds**

**SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP)** — El Salvadoran President Mauricio Funes says one of the country's ex-leaders has essentially admitted to criminal mismanagement of \$10 million that Taiwan donated to the Central American government in 2003 and 2004. Funes says former President Francisco Flores made what amounts to an "extra-judicial confession" in a statement this week before the country's congress.

Flores said he had received the money personally from Taiwan and had handed it over to the intended state projects, but offered no proof of the handover.

#### **Couple's fight forces jet to stop in Brazil**

**SAO PAULO (AP)** — A Brazilian domestic airline says a quarreling couple forced a pilot to make an unscheduled landing on Thursday. Azul Linhas Aereas says in an emailed statement that the plane was flying to Sao Paulo when the "inconvenient behavior" of two passengers forced the pilot to land in the city of Salvador. The airline did not provide further details of the quarrel, but passengers cited by the G1 and UOL news portals said the man assaulted one of the flight attendants who tried to calm him down. The couple was later taken into custody by federal police agents.

#### **Conjoined whale calves found: Mexico**

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — The Mexican government says fishermen found two rare conjoined gray whale calves that died shortly after being born. Biologist Benito Bermudez says the whales were found alive in the Ojo de Liebre lagoon in the Baja California Peninsula but lived only a few hours. Bermudez said they were linked at the waist, with two full heads and tail fins. Bermudez is a marine biologist with the National Natural Protected Areas Commission, or CONANP. He said scientists are collecting skin, muscle and baleen samples to study the creatures.

#### **Guatemala bans Zamora from leaving**

**GUATEMALA CITY (AP)** — A Guatemalan journalist has been barred from leaving the country so that he can potentially face criminal charges filed by the country's president. Newspaper director Jose Ruben Zamora has published a series of articles critical of the government. Perez Molina filed a series of criminal complaints against the director of the paper El Periodico in December, including charges of extortion and blackmail. El Periodico reported this week that a judge had barred Zamora from traveling so that he could potentially face the charges filed by the president.



# Obama grappling with key decisions in NSA policy

JULIE PACE  
KIMBERLY DOZIER  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Barack Obama is still grappling with key decisions on the future of the National Security Agency's phone collection program and the makeup of the secret court that approved the surveillance, lawmakers said Thursday following a 90-minute meeting at the White House.

Obama is expected to back tighter restrictions on foreign leader spying and also is considering a presidential commission's recommendation to strip the NSA of its ability to store telephone records from millions of Americans. The president could announce his final decisions as early as next week.

Documents released by former National Security Agency systems analyst Edward Snowden revealed that the U.S. was monitoring the communications of several friendly foreign leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The revelations outraged Merkel as well as other leaders, and U.S. officials say the disclosures have damaged Obama's relations around the world.

"The president and his administration are wrestling

with the issues," Sen. Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat and privacy advocate, said after the meeting. "It's fair to say that the next few weeks are going to be crunch time in terms of judgments being made in both the administration and the Congress."

Rep. Adam Schiff, a Democrat, said the meeting focused in particular on the telephone data program and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. The president also met this week with his top intelligence advisers, many of whom oppose changes to the NSA programs, and a review group appointed by Congress that is working on a report focused on the surveillance systems. Privacy advocates met with senior White House staff Thursday afternoon, and technology companies have been invited to a meeting on Friday.

The president's decisions will test how far he is willing to go in scaling back the NSA's broad surveillance powers. A presidential commission handed him more than 40 recommendations, many of which were more sweeping than expected. However, Obama is not obligated to accept any of the panel's proposals. □



President Barack Obama winks at Kiara Molina, 14, of Harlem, with the Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy, as she introduces him as "my President," at an event in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014, where the president spoke about the Promise Zones Initiative.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

## Coast Guard: Search for missing sailor called off

**VIRGINIA BEACH, Virginia (AP)** — The Coast Guard says rescuers have called off the search for a sailor who has been missing since a Navy helicopter with five crew members aboard crashed in the ocean off the Virginia coast. Two people died in the Wednesday crash, which happened during a routine training mission. The Coast Guard had searched for the missing sailor by air and sea for more than 30 hours before calling off the active search at 3:30 p.m. Thursday. The Navy also sent out two helicopters to assist with the search.

"We're not actively look-

ing, but we have an on-the-scene presence," said Capt. John Little, Coast Guard section commander.

The Navy says the two who died were among four crew members hoisted from the 42-degree (6-Celsius) waters Wednesday by a Navy helicopter and taken to a hospital.

Of the two survivors, one was released from the hospital Thursday, and the other could be released as soon as Friday, said Capt. Todd Flannery, the commander of Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Atlantic at a press conference. He declined to identify the survivors. □

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# Christie Fires Aide In Bridge Scandal; US Opens Inquiry

Continued from front

For Christie, one of the leading figures in the Republican Party and a likely

sends the gravest challenge to his political career.

He took questions for nearly two hours, repeatedly saying he played no part in what led to four days of

planning or its execution," Christie said.

"And I am stunned by the abject stupidity that was shown here, regardless of what the facts ultimately

He said that four weeks ago, before publicly addressing the simmering controversy, he gathered his top staff members and asked them if anyone had anything to do with the lane closings.

"They all reported that there was no information other than what we already knew," he said. "I was being led to believe by folks around me that there was no basis to this. I was wrong."

He vowed to restore the trust of the people and cooperate with any investigations into the matter.

The U.S. attorney for New Jersey, Paul J. Fishman, opened an inquiry after the matter was referred to the office by the inspector general for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which controls the bridge.

The fallout from the release of the emails, which are as brazen as they are blunt, reverberated nationally,

threatening to undermine Christie's carefully cultivated image.

Political opponents were quick to seize on the governor's troubles.

"For nearly two hours today, Chris Christie stood up and repeatedly made himself out to be the victim," said Mo Elleithee, a spokesman for the Democratic National Committee. "But Chris Christie is not the victim. The people of New Jersey who trusted him are."

Christie has been accused at times of bullying political opponents, and he was asked if the tone of the emails was a reflection on his own governing style.

"This is not the tone I have set over the last four years in this building," he said. "I am who I am. But I am not a bully."

The controversy is unlikely to abate any time soon, with New Jersey Democrats vowing to subpoena everyone mentioned in the emails. □



Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich arrives for a news conference at Fort Lee, N.J., City Hall, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

candidate for the party's presidential nomination in 2016, the scandal repre-

sents the gravest challenge to his political career.

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# Rodman apologizes for comments on jailed American

ERIC TALMADGE

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON/PYONG-YANG (AP)** — Dennis Rodman apologized Thursday for comments he made in North Korea about a detained American missionary, saying he had been drinking and was under pressure as he organized a game with former NBA players.

The former basketball star issued the apology through publicist Jules Feiler in an email message to The Associated Press, a day after he sang "Happy Birthday" to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the start of the friendly game.

Rodman has been slammed for not using his influence with Kim to help free Kenneth Bae, the missionary in poor health who is being confined in North Korea for "anti-state" crimes. In an interview with CNN on Tuesday, Rodman implied Bae was at fault.

"I want to apologize," Rodman said Thursday. "I take full responsibility for my ac-

tions. It had been a very stressful day. Some of my teammates were leaving because of pressure from their families and business associates. My dreams of basketball diplomacy was quickly falling apart. I had been drinking. It's not an

Rodman said he wanted to apologize first to Bae's family. "I'm very sorry. At this point I should know better than to make political statements. I'm truly sorry." In the interview, Rodman was asked whether he would raise the issue of Bae



Dennis Rodman applauds from court side at an exhibition basketball game between U.S. and North Korean players at an indoor stadium in Pyongyang, North Korea on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2014.

(AP Photo/Kim Kwang Hyon)

excuse but by the time the interview happened I was upset. I was overwhelmed. It's not an excuse, it's just the truth."

during his visit. "Kenneth Bae did one thing," Rodman replied. "If you understand what Kenneth Bae did — do you un-

derstand what he did in this country?"

Asked to explain, Rodman declined to respond.

Bae, a Korean-American Christian missionary and tour operator based in China, has been detained for more than a year. North Korea sees missionary work as a threat to its authoritarian government.

Bae's sister, Terri Chung, welcomed Rodman's apology. "I think it's good to see him recognize the gravity and the urgency of Ken's plight," she said from her home in Edmonds, Washington. "It's nothing he can make light of or play games with."

"I just want to make sure that everyone — not just Dennis Rodman — everyone knows about Kenneth

Bae's plight and how precarious it is," she said.

The U.S. State Department distanced itself from Rodman and said it did not want to "dignify" his activities or comments in Pyongyang by commenting on them. But spokeswoman Jen Psaki said the department was open to speaking with Rodman on his return.

"We have not reached out to him. We've said before, if he wants to reach out to us, we're happy to hear from him and what he has to say," she told reporters. Rodman dedicated the game to his "best friend" Kim, who along with his wife and other senior officials and their wives watched from a special seating area. □

## US man home after being held in UAE

AMY FORLITI

Associated Press

**MINNEAPOLIS (AP)** — An American man returned to the U.S. on Thursday after spending nine months in prison in the United Arab Emirates for his role in making and posting online a satirical video about youth culture in Dubai.

Shezanne Cassim, 29, told reporters that he did nothing wrong and that there was nothing illegal about the video.

"I was tried in a textbook kangaroo court, and I was convicted without any evidence," Cassim said after an airplane carrying him home arrived at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. He said his ordeal shows the UAE is "scared of democracy."

Cassim was arrested in April and had been held at a maximum security prison in Abu Dhabi since June.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who advocated for Cassim's release, said his return

home was "long overdue." "This guy has been waiting nine months for doing nothing but posting a joke video," Klobuchar told The Associated Press in telephone interview Thursday. "It was simply a parody video poking fun at teenagers in the suburbs."

Susan Burns, the family's attorney in the U.S., said UAE prison officials escorted Cassim to an airport in the UAE on Wednesday, where he was reunited with his father and put on an airplane.

Jennifer Gore, a spokeswoman for Cassim's family, and Burns said the family is excited for Cassim's return. "You can imagine the torture they've been under for nine months, not knowing if they were going to see him, when they were going to see him," Burns said. "There's been a lot of anxiety ... mostly due to the arbitrary procedures over there and the lack of transparency."

"Now, they are ecstatic to be able to actually see him, and his mom is looking forward to hugging him," she said.

The UAE-owned daily newspaper, The National, has said Cassim and his co-defendants were accused of defaming the country's image abroad. Cassim's supporters said he was charged with endangering state security under a 2012 cybercrimes law that tightened penalties for challenging authorities.

He and seven others were convicted in December. Cassim was sentenced to one year in prison, a fine and deportation. The U.S. State Department said he got credit for time served and was given time off for good behavior.

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Thursday that U.S. officials visited Cassim regularly, including as recently as Wednesday, before he was released. □

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## Spilled Milk: Dairy rift holds up farm bill

**RON NIXON**

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**WASHINGTON** - Disagreements over a program to help dairy producers when milk prices drop have emerged as a major sticking point in negotiations on a new farm bill, which had been expected to be wrapped up this week. But lawmakers appear to have reached an agreement on cuts to the food stamp program, which is part of the farm bill and had been the most contentious issue in efforts to pass the legislation.

People close to the negotiations said Thursday that a deal had been reached to cut about \$9 billion over 10 years from the food stamp program, formally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The cuts are more than twice the \$4 billion approved by the Democratic-led Senate in May, but far less than the nearly \$40 billion in cuts passed by the Republican-controlled House in its bill.

The food stamp issue was expected to be the major stumbling block in the farm bill negotiations, but long-simmering debates over the best way to help dairy farmers when prices drop have come to the forefront. Speaker John A. Boehner has voiced opposition to the dairy program and has said he will not allow it to be part of a final House bill.

The program, which limits dairy supplies to help bolster the price of milk, is generally opposed by conservatives. Boehner and Rep. Robert W. Goodlatte, R-Va., called it a "Soviet style" government bureaucracy that distorts the market.

The provision is supported by dairy producers and legislators from large milk-producing states, including Rep. Collin C. Peterson, D-Minn., a member of the House Agriculture Committee, who said it was important to stabilize milk prices.

Dean Norton, the president of the New York Farm Bureau and a dairy farmer in Batavia, said the program was vital. "This program keeps us from having these wild fluctuations in milk prices," Norton said. "It's just providing a safety net for producers. It's not a direct subsidy, and it's not a handout."

Congressional aides in both parties said the food stamps cuts would not force people out of the program, but anti-hunger groups and Democrats like Sen. Kirsten E. Gillibrand of New York have long said that any reductions would reduce monthly food stamp benefits for nearly 1 million people.

"The willingness of some Senate Democrats to double new cuts to the program - while leaving the corporate welfare in the bill mostly intact - is unthinkable," said Joel Berg, the executive director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. It was unclear how the new figure for the cuts would affect votes for a final bill. Many Senate Democrats may be reluctant to support larger reductions to the program, while House conservatives may see the cuts as too low. Lawmakers in both chambers said they were taking a wait-and-see approach. A plan to shift catfish inspections to the Agriculture Department from the Food and Drug Administration also appears to be impeding a deal on the farm bill. The \$20 million Agriculture Department program has drawn considerable criticism because it duplicates a much cheaper program at the Food and Drug Administration. Despite the program's costs, the Agriculture Department has yet to inspect a single catfish. Catfish farmers and Southern lawmakers say the program is needed to protect consumers from catfish imported from countries such as Vietnam. But critics call it a trade barrier designed to protect domestic catfish farmers. □

## Airlines go on new jet shopping spree

**SCOTT MAYEROWITZ**

AP Airlines Writer

**ROSWELL, New Mexico**

**(AP)** — Capt. Paul Wannberg glides an old Boeing 757 over the New Mexico desert, lining up with the runway. A computerized voice squawks elevation warnings. Forty feet. Thirty. Twenty. Ten. Touchdown. Outside the cockpit window sit nearly a hundred airplane carcasses, perfectly lined up. They are jets that nobody wants anymore. And — after 26,057 takeoffs and land-

is expected to keep climbing.

The new planes allow the airlines to save on fuel, now their biggest cost, while offering passengers more amenities — some for a fee. Passengers can plug in to work or be entertained by a seat-back TV and fly some international routes nonstop for the first time. And the commercial divisions of Boeing and Airbus get a steady stream of cash for years, which is a key reason investors have doubled the companies'

to replace aging gas-guzzlers — like the American 757 that Capt. Wannberg parked in the desert in Roswell. The plane showed its age. Many armrests originally came with ashtrays. The seatback pocket on 27D was hanging by its last thread. And the window shade at 1F wouldn't close. American would have had to spend \$6 million to \$10 million for heavy maintenance checks on the airframe, overhauls of the engines and other part replacements to keep the



**Parts are removed from a retired American Airlines' jet engine in Roswell, N.M. Airlines are on the largest jet buying spree in the history of aviation, ordering more than 8,200 new planes with the old planes being sent to the desert where the dry air prevents the aluminum airframe from corroding and spare parts can be harvested or the old jets get chopped up for scrap metal.**

**(AP Photo/LM Otero)**

ings — this 24-year-old American Airlines plane is about to join them.

"This is my first time here, and it's a sad place," First Officer Robert Popp tells the control tower. Airlines used to store planes in the desert during slow travel months. Sometimes, unwanted jets would be sold to carriers in Russia or Africa. Today, a man on the other end of the radio responds, "they're chopping them up." Airlines are on the largest jet-buying spree in the history of aviation, ordering more than 8,200 new planes with manufacturers Airbus SAS and The Boeing Co. in the past five years. There are now a combined 24 planes rolling off assembly lines each week, up from 11 a decade ago. And that rate

stock price in the past year. The bulk of the planes are going to new or quickly-growing airlines that serve an expanding middle class in India and the rest of Asia. The International Air Transport Association expects the number of passengers worldwide to grow 31 percent to 3.9 billion in the next four years.

U.S. airlines are buying as well. After suffering through the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, bankruptcies and recessions, they're now strong enough financially to buy new jets. Domestic carriers spent \$11.6 billion last year on capital improvements — including new planes — up from \$5.2 billion in 2010.

With the price of fuel nearly four times what it was 10 years ago, airlines need

plane flying.

Instead, it went to Roswell. There, the dry air prevents the aluminum airframe from corroding. Spare parts will be harvested from the jet; eventually it will be chopped up for scrap metal. It's a fate many U.S. planes are facing. On Monday, Delta Air Lines retired the last of its DC-9s, a 35-year-old jet that had been the workhorse of U.S. airlines for decades. Over the past five years U.S. airlines have retired nearly 1,300 other planes — more than 20 a month — to various desert facilities in the last five years, according to Flightglobal's Ascend Online Fleets, which sells and tracks information about aircraft.

**Continued on Page 27**



## US Financial Front:

# Weekly American unemployment claims drop to 330K

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell 15,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 330,000, signaling fewer layoffs and steady job growth.

The Labor Department said Thursday that the less volatile four-week average dropped 9,750 to 349,000. A Labor spokesman said there was no indication that snow and freezing weather around much of the country caused the drop in applications.

Applications are a proxy for layoffs. They appear to have stabilized near pre-recession levels after a period of volatility around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. That suggests recent job gains will continue.

"The underlying trend is encouraging and supports the view that job creation is picking up momentum," said Jennifer Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets.

Outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas said in a separate report that the number of announced job cuts fell 3 percent last year to 509,051. That's the fewest layoffs reported by the firm since 1997. The decline in layoffs has coincided with stronger hiring. Employers have added an average of 200,000 jobs a month from August through November. That's helped lower the unemployment rate to a five-year low of 7 percent.

The government will release the December jobs report on Friday.

There are signs that the job gains have helped to lift other parts of the economy. Consumer confidence and spending have picked up. Orders to U.S. manufacturers rose in November, a sign that businesses are investing more on factory-made items such as machinery, computers and electrical goods.

Many economists have become more optimistic about growth in the October-December quarter



Retired U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Thomas Gipson, of Atlanta, right, has his resume looked over by Ralph Brown, a management and program analyst with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, during a job fair for veterans at the VFW Post 2681, Marietta, Ga. The Labor Department reported positive news on the number of people who applied for U.S. unemployment benefits the first week of 2014 on Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014.

(AP Photo/David Goldman)

that just ended. Several are projecting a strong annual growth rate of 3 percent or more. That would follow growth at an annual rate of 4.1 percent in the July-Sep-

tember quarter, the fastest pace since late 2011. Not all the data have been positive. Income rose at a slower pace than spending last month. Americans are

spending more but saving less. And sales of existing homes have fallen for three straight months, held back by higher prices and mortgage rates. □

## US retailers of all stripes sing 2013 holiday blues

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Several major retailers slashed their fiscal fourth-quarter profit forecasts this week in the latest sign that Americans didn't spend briskly during the holiday shopping season. American Eagle Outfitters and Bed Bath & Beyond are among seven retail chains so far that have cut their expectations for their fiscal fourth quarter, which includes the critical holiday shopping season when stores can make up to 40 percent of their annual sales.

The holiday season was challenging for stores as many Americans still were contending with the effects of a shaky economic recovery. Weather was also an issue, as snowstorms across the country kept some shoppers home. And

the season was six days shorter, which meant less time for people to shop.

Retailers discounted early and often to get shoppers into stores. In fact, it was common to see sales of 50 percent off a store's entire stock of clothes during the final days of the season. It appears that the discounts got people to spend — sales for November and December rose a better-than-expected 2.7 percent to \$265.9 billion, according to data tracker ShopperTrak. But the deep price cuts ate away at retailers' profits.

As a result, Bed Bath & Beyond Inc., a New Jersey company, on Wednesday lowered its earnings forecast for the fiscal fourth quarter and full year that ends early this year after its third-quarter results missed analysts' expectations. □



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# Suicide bomber kills 22 recruits on Iraq Police Day

**DURAID ADNAN**

© 2014 New York Times

**BAGHDAD** - A suicide bomber detonated ex-

province, the police said. Twenty-two recruits were killed, and 31 others were injured, officials said.

attacker joined the line and blew himself up. "We came to join the army to fight al-Qaida, and this

an attempt by Sunni militants to stop the flow of government troops to Anbar, where Qaida fighters have taken control of significant parts of the two main cities, Ramadi and Falluja. "We are here to die for our country; we've had enough of them," Jasim said of al-Qaida. "They targeted us today because they are afraid of us reaching there." The Shiite-led government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has called for new troops to join its fight against the militants in Anbar. Officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity said the recruits joining the army now were Shiites who would be deployed against the Sunni fighters after a short training period. The fighting in Anbar has become increasingly complex, with shifting alliances and escalating sectarian tensions. Some fighters from Sunni tribes in the region are siding with the government, while other tribal forces oppose the military push in the province, seeing it as a heavy-handed attempt by al-Maliki to extend the influence of Iran, an ally of

his government.

"Maliki's terrorist army has failed, and now he is trying to get new fighters," said Adnan al Muhana, a leader of Al Bu-Alwan, one of the largest Sunni tribes in Anbar province.

He said it was notable that al-Maliki's recruitment drive had not won support from a potentially rich source of Shiite recruits in southern Iraq, suggesting that stronger loyalties existed between tribes than along sectarian lines.

"We heard from all the tribes in the south that they will not send their sons to fight against Anbar," Muhana said. He said that he thought the bomber who struck Thursday was from the south.

The fighting in western Anbar has escalated in recent days, especially in the desert areas. According to security officials, six fighters affiliated with al-Qaida were recently killed by Sunni tribal allies of the government. In Ramadi, most shops were open Thursday, and life appeared to be returning to normal, after the security forces had regained control. □



**Iraqi tribal leaders march during a ceremony marking Police Day at the police academy in Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014. Elsewhere in the country, tribal leaders in Fallujah, 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Baghdad, have warned al-Qaida fighters there to leave to avoid a military showdown.**  
(AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

plosives Thursday among a group of recruits who were joining the Iraqi army to fight al-Qaida in Anbar

The recruits were lined up just outside the entrance gate at the Muthana airfield in Baghdad when the

will not stop us," Ali Jasim, one of the recruits at the base, said in a telephone interview after the blast. Jasim said the attack was

## Enrichment disputes hamper Iran nuclear deal

**GEORGE JAHN**

**Associated Press**

**VIENNA (AP)** — Nearly seven weeks after signing a landmark nuclear deal, Iran and six world powers hope to reach an agreement this week on its implementation. But differences over Tehran's push to improve its uranium enrichment abilities could delay its enactment and strengthen critics of the accord in Washington and Tehran.

Both sides say agreement is possible at a two-day meeting beginning Thursday afternoon in Geneva — with caveats.

European Union spokeswoman Maja Kocijanic said "some issues remain to be resolved" during the talks, a statement echoed by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham.

The meeting is formally being held by Iranian Deputy

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and EU senior negotiator Helga Schmid on behalf of the six world powers.

But the U.S. State Department has announced that senior U.S. negotiator Wendy Sherman would also attend — an indication that Washington wants to be in place if the two sides overcome their differences and announce a deal by Friday.

Asked if the U.S. anticipated agreement, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Wednesday that "there are just a few remaining issues, so we're working toward that."

Psaki did not go into specifics on the nature of the disagreements in keeping with the confidential nature of the negotiations. But two officials told The Associated Press that Iran is coming to the table with demands to exempt a fa-

cility used for research and the development of uranium enrichment from the overall curbs on its enrichment. That is something opposed by the six powers which sealed the Nov. 24 deal with Tehran.

Depending on its grade, enriched uranium can be used either for reactor fuel or — at levels above 90 percent — for the fissile core of a nuclear warhead. Iran insists it has no interest in nuclear weapons only nuclear power but the United States and its allies are skeptical.

Limiting uranium enrichment is one of the core aims of the six-month interim deal meant to prepare ground for a permanent accord on Iran's nuclear program. Under the November agreement, Iran agreed to limit its uranium enrichment to 5 percent — the grade commonly used to power reactors. □



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## Lawyer: Knox couple blamed to calm Italian fears

**COLLEEN BARRY**  
Associated Press

**FLORENCE, Italy (AP)** — The defense lawyer for the former boyfriend of U.S. exchange student Amanda Knox told an appeals court Thursday that the young lovers were blamed by authorities for the murder of a British student to calm fears that a monster was loose in their Italian university town. Defender Giulia Bongiorno said her client, Raffaele Sollecito, and Knox were identified as suspects by police in a "record" four days after the murder of Meredith Kercher in the central town of Perugia because authorities "did not want to think that a stranger, a monster, could have entered a house and murdered a student."

Bongiorno said much of the evidence later used to convict the pair in their first trial — including the presumed murder weapon found in Sollecito's kitchen drawer and a clasp that had been ripped from Kercher's bra — had not even been gathered by investigators at that point.

Bongiorno, on the last day of closing arguments in the pair's third trial, showed a court slides and videos in a bid to dismantle the prosecution's case. Sollecito sat at her side.

Kercher, 21, was found murdered in her bedroom in the apartment she shared with Knox and two others on Nov. 2, 2007, having been sexually assaulted and stabbed.

In their first trial, Knox and Sollecito were sentenced to 26 years and 25 years, respectively, in proceedings that made headlines around the world.

Italy's high court ordered the case back to trial after vacating their 2011 acquittals, blasting the appeals court's handling of the case. While Sollecito, now 29, has attended several hearings, Knox, 26, remains in Seattle, where she returned a free woman after her acquittal.

A third man, Ivory Coast-born Rudy Hermann Guede, is serving a 16-year term in the case after be-

ing convicted in a separate trial.

Knox, in an interview published Thursday in the *La Repubblica* newspaper, said she didn't return to face trial because she feared being jailed again. "It was a difficult choice, because I would have wanted to come to Italy to speak directly to the judges," Knox was quoted as saying.

She added that she hopes she can meet Kercher's parents "after my innocence has been definitively confirmed."

Kercher's family, through their lawyer, have expressed pain at Knox's attempts to reach out to them, especially at her solicitation of donations in Kercher's name for an unidentified project in her memory.

Prosecutors initially said Kercher was killed in a drug-fueled sex game that went bad. But in this trial, Prosecutor Alessandro Crini has backed away from the orgy scenario of previous trials.

Crini is arguing that the violence was triggered when Guede failed to flush a toilet, igniting an alleged dispute between the roommates over cleanliness.

Bongiorno, the defense lawyer, argued that the young lovers had no motive for the crime, noting their romance was just 9 ½ days old when Kercher's half-naked body was discovered.

"The relationship between Amanda and Raffaele was tender, just bloomed, and it had nothing to do with a 50s-something's searching for thrills," Bongiorno said.

The two, she said, liked to cuddle and rub noses like Eskimo kisses, which she called “unca nunca.”

"Unca nunca has nothing to do with bunga bunga," Bongiorno said, eliciting a rare moment of laughter in a long day of arguments with a reference to former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's infamous parties with scantily clad women.

Bongiorno said Sollecito never met Guede before the crime "and it is absurd

to think that they met that night." She also argued against the theory that there were multiple assailants, and said the knife

son has been convicted," Bongiorno said. "All the rest are clues invented about Amanda and thrown on Raffaele."

rug attributed to him that she said was the wrong size and model.

Turning to a clasp ripped from Kercher's bra — the



Amanda Knox is escorted into the Perugia court for an appeal hearing in this September 2011 photo. The defense lawyer for the former boyfriend of Knox told an appeals court Thursday that the two were blamed by authorities for the murder of a Meredith Kercher to calm fears that a monster was loose in their Italian university town.

(AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito)

found at Sollecito's house was too large to have been the murder weapon. "The aggression was by one person and that per-

The defense lawyer blasted alleged evidence used to link Sollecito to the murder, showing a slide of a bloody footprint on a bathroom

only piece of evidence linked to Sollecito that was found in Kercher's bedroom — she said it had been contaminated. □



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# Portugal, Spain find debt cheaper as trust returns

**BARRY HATTON**  
**Associated Press**

**LISBON, Portugal (AP)** — In the latest sign that the financial gloom over Europe is lifting, some of the region's most cash-strapped governments are raising money on bond markets — and finding it cheap.

Portugal collected 3.25 billion euros (\$4.4 billion) from a sale of five-year government bonds on Thursday, the first of its kind since it agreed to an international rescue program in 2011.

In return for the 78 billion euros (\$106 billion) in loans, Portugal accepted a three-year austerity program to heal its finances. The evidence, at least in the markets, suggests that the strategy is working.

The yields, or interest rates, that Europe's troubled economies pay on their loans have fallen steeply as investors have become more optimistic.

Nursing Europe back to economic health is seen as vital for global growth.

Ireland exited its own bailout program at the end of last year and this week also had a successful debt issue.

Spain is also benefiting from the improving market mood as its banks recover from a hammering they took when the country's real estate boom went

bust.

The Spanish treasury sold 3.53 billion euros in five-year bonds Thursday at an interest rate of 2.38 percent, the lowest it has ever been able to offer for that bond.

cent. That put it only 1.86 percentage points higher than the equivalent German bond — considered a benchmark of safe investment. Similar levels have not been seen since 2011.

its 10-year bonds soared to almost 18 percent.

Filipe Silva, debt manager of Lisbon-based financial group Banco Carregosa, said recovering countries in the 18-member eurozone

at where they can make some profit," he said.

Confidence in European bond markets has improved steadily since the summer of 2012, when the European Central Bank said it was ready to do "whatever it takes" to keep the currency union together.

The bank said it was ready to buy an unlimited amount of bonds from any eurozone country that requested help.

That increased investors' confidence to buy the bonds of countries like Portugal that are still struggling economically.

Fears that Portugal could need a second bailout, like Greece, have faded as the country has reduced its debt load. The budget deficit last year is expected to be around 5.5 percent, compared with 10.1 percent in 2010.

The success, however, has come at a price. As tax hikes and pay cuts depressed consumer demand, the jobless rate has climbed.

Though it has been inching lower for nine months, it is still at 15.5 percent. Also, though Portugal emerged from recession last year, its economy still needs to grow muscle. The government forecasts meager growth of 0.8 percent next year. □



**A food seller carries a box as she attends customers at Lisbon's Ribeira food market. In the latest sign that the financial gloom over Europe is lifting, some of the region's most cash-strapped governments, like Portugal, are raising money on bond markets — and finding it cheap.**

**(AP Photo/Francisco Seco)**

It also sold 1.76 billion euros in 15-year bonds Thursday at a rate of 4.19 percent.

Meanwhile, the rate for Spain's benchmark 10-year bond on the secondary market — where bonds are traded after they are issued — was at 3.76 per-

In Portugal, Finance Minister Maria Luis Albuquerque said there was demand for 11 billion euros of bonds in the "very successful" sale. The yield was an affordable 4.66 percent. At the height of Portugal's troubles in 2011, the yields on

are being helped by market conditions.

"The reality is this: there's excess liquidity in the market and investors need good investments.

There are few alternatives offering such good returns and investors are looking

## Ruling blocks show by controversial French comic

**ELAINE GANLEY**  
**Associated Press**

**PARIS (AP)** — A French comic who is considered anti-Semitic was banned from performing Thursday night just hours after a court in Nantes said he could go ahead with his show.

As dueling rulings by French authorities sowed widespread confusion, riot police carrying shields blocked access to the Zenith theater in the western city of Nantes, where thousands of stunned ticket-holders in the nearly sold-out show milled around.

The tug-of-war over comic Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala involved a multitude of French authorities: the

Council of State, the country's highest administrative body; the city of Nantes; a court in Nantes and Interior Minister Manuel Valls.

Valls wants Dieudonne, as he is known, kept off all stages in France, denouncing what he calls the "mechanics of hate" relayed by the comic.

The city of Nantes had banned the comic's performance, but a Nantes court overturned that ban earlier Thursday.

Valls then took the matter to the ultimate authority, the Council of State, asking for an urgent decision.

"In the face of the mechanics of hate ... we need firmness and determination

and great calm," the interior minister said in response to the Nantes court decision.

Citing a risk to public safety and fundamental French values, the Council banned the performance only two hours before the show was to begin.

It brushed aside claims that Dieudonne would change his show to avoid offensive language, and said a "serious risk" of "grave attacks" to fundamental French values could not be dismissed. The 47-year-old comedian has been convicted more than a half-dozen times for inciting racial hatred or anti-Semitism in shows in which the Holocaust has

been derided.

He also has popularized the "quenelle" hand gesture, which Valls has criticized as an "inverted Nazi salute."

Dieudonne (pronounced DYEU-dun-ay) denies that his act and the "quenelle" are anti-Semitic.

Valls declared that France had been made stronger by the decision to keep Dieudonne off the stage in Nantes.

"(But) the combat against the nauseating words of this personage continues," Valls said on the iTele TV station.

"Citizens should not go to these shows."

There was no immediate

reaction from Dieudonne, who had arrived expecting to perform after winning the first court battle.

However, his Facebook page advised fans to avoid confrontation and go home "singing the Marseillaise," the French national anthem.

The Nantes show was to kick off a national tour. On Monday, Valls declared that mayors or prefects could ban performances they consider a threat to public order.

At least eight of the nearly 30 French cities where the comic's tour is planned through June are known to have banned his performances. □





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## Syrian opposition group stands on brink of collapse

**RYAN LUCAS**  
**ZEINA KARAM**  
**Associated Press**

**BEIRUT (AP)** — Two weeks ahead of an international peace conference on Syria, the country's main Western-backed opposition group stands on the brink of collapse, dragged down by outside pressures, infighting and deep disagreements over the basic question of whether to talk to President Bashar Assad. The crisis in the Syrian National Coalition raises further doubts about the so-called Geneva conference, which is set to open Jan. 22 in Montreux, Switzerland. The prospects for a successful outcome at the talks appear bleak at best: Assad has said he will not hand over power, and the opposition — if it decides to attend — is in no position to force concessions from him.

The U.S. and Russia, which support opposing sides in the conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people, have been trying for months to bring the Syrian government and its opponents to the table for negotiations aimed at ending the war. But with the fighting deadlocked, neither the government nor the rebels showed any interest in compromise, forcing the meeting to be repeatedly postponed.

Now that a date has been set and invitations sent, the

decision on whether to attend is placing immense strain on the Coalition.

"Geneva is proving to be a road to ruin for the so-called moderate opposition, both the political and military aspects," said Salman Shaikh, director of the Brookings Doha Center.

The various competing factions that make up the Coalition are under intense international pressure to attend, Shaikh said, all the while knowing that "if they do, they may very well be entering into a very ill-defined and ill-prepared conference that may not produce anything that they can show to their brethren inside Syria, and further diminish their credibility."

The issue of credibility has haunted the Coalition since its creation just over a year ago. The umbrella group was forged under international pressure for a stronger, more united body to serve as a counterweight to the extremist forces fighting the Assad government.

But the Coalition has never coalesced into the unified and effective leadership outside powers, including the United States and its Arab allies, envisioned, while the rebels and activists inside Syria have accused the opposition-in-exile of being ineffectual and out of touch.

Some of the Coalition's

struggles have not been entirely of its own making, and the decision of whether to attend the peace conference has laid bare the group's internal contradictions.

The Coalition was never an organic organization that enjoyed broad popular support inside Syria from activists and fighters. Its legitimacy has always flowed from its foreign patrons.

The group could have boosted its credibility with its detractors inside Syria by securing concrete international support — especially weapons — from its allies. But those sponsors routinely balked, fearful that any arms they provided might fall into the hands of the Islamic extremists who have become a dominant force among the armed opposition.

The failure to deliver sapped any goodwill the Coalition might have been able to curry with the fighters, activists and civilians inside Syria. It all began to publicly unravel in September when nearly a dozen of the most prominent rebel factions publicly broke with the coalition and its military wing, the Supreme Military Council. Many more have since followed suit. □



Syrian citizens gather at site where a car bomb has exploded near a school, at al-Kaffat village in the central Hama province, Syria, Thursday Jan. 9, 2013. Syrian state media and an opposition watchdog say a car bomb has exploded near a school in a central province, killing several people and wounding dozens.

(AP Photo/SANA)

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# Haiti police: Killers targeted moto-taxi drivers

TRENTON DANIEL

Associated Press

**THOMAZEAU, Haiti (AP)** — Detectives have recovered the remains of at least 10 people in a remote area apparently used by a gang to execute moto-taxi drivers it robbed, a police official said Wednesday.

Investigators from the Haitian National Police and the United Nations police division found the remains in a cactus-studded no-man's-land near Thomazeau, a town northeast of Port-au-Prince and west of Lake Azuei. The bodies were in different states of decomposition. Pierre Lesley Charles, police commissioner for the nearby district of Croix-des-Bouquets, told The Associated Press that police learned of the killings after one moto-taxi driver escaped from the gang as it killed two other drivers.

Charles said the gang stopped drivers as they passed through the rugged area, then strangled them or hacked them to death with machetes and stole their motorcycles.

He said police initially found the two bodies reported by the escaping driver.

Police took three people into custody, including a 20-year-old named Wilner Joseph who cooperated with police and led detectives to the desert-like area Wednesday, where more bodies were discovered, Charles said.

Police and U.N. investigators photographed skulls and clothing as they recorded the GPS coordinates of the remains.

Carmin Baptiste, an investigative magistrate for Croix-des-Bouquets who was at the site, said the area has a reputation for lawlessness because of a scant police presence. He said there could be up to 12 bodies. "This is a place for execution," he said.

Haiti has only 10,000 police officers in a country of 10 million people, and a U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti since 2004 has helped the small force with criminal investigations. □



**A Haitian investigator demonstrates how hands are tied in an execution-style killing as he stands next to human remains in a field outside Thomazeau, Haiti, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2014.**

(AP Photo/Trenton Daniel)

## Panama Canal talks run into cash troubles

**PANAMA CITY (AP)** — Negotiations over massive cost overruns in the expansion of the Panama Canal appeared to run into trouble Wednesday when one of the companies involved demanded more than \$1 billion to continue work on the project.

The Panama Canal Authority immediately rejected the proposal.

"There is no negotiation outside the contract," canal administrator Jorge Luis Quijano said.

On Tuesday, the canal authority proposed that it inject \$183 million into the project to allow the consortium expanding the canal to continue work for several months while a permanent solution is sought to a dispute over the more than \$1.5-billion in cost overruns. The authority wanted the consortium to put in \$100 million. Italy's Impregilo, one of the corporations in the consortium, countered with a demand for \$1 billion from the canal authority. Quijano said the authority was sticking by its proposal for a joint injection of \$283 million, moving the conflict closer to the Jan. 20 deadline that the consortium has established for resolving the dispute or halting work. "We hope they're reasonable and let the work finish," he said. "But we have no qualms about working with another contractor." The Panama-based spokesman for the consortium did not comment Wednesday. The consortium is comprised of Impregilo, Spain's Sacyr Vallehermoso, Jan De Nul of Belgium and Constructora Urbana SA of Panama. It has said that unexpected problems with the quality of material supposed to be used to make cement spawned massive overruns, and blamed the canal authority for carrying out insufficient geological studies before work began. The claimed cost overrun is roughly half of Grupo Unidos por el Canal's original \$3.2 billion bid to build a third set of locks. □

## Fidel Castro makes rare public appearance

**HAVANA (AP)** — Former President Fidel Castro made his first public appearance in nine months, attending the opening of an art studio in the Cuban capital.

Official newspapers and websites on Thursday carried a photo showing a seated, gray-haired Castro from behind, pointing at a work of art while artist Alexis Leyva leans in to talk to him at the Wednesday night event. Cuban state television also broadcast video of the encounter on the afternoon news.

Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia published three other pictures on its website that showed Cas-

tro's face. Wearing a black jacket and green scarf on a cool Havana evening, Castro reaches out to touch a sculpture in one of the images.

Castro last appeared in public on April 9, 2013, when he attended the inauguration of Havana school.

In December he met privately with visiting Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, a key ally of Cuba.

Castro, 87, led Cuba for 48 years before falling gravely ill in July 2006 and handing over power to his brother Raul, who formally became president in January 2008. □



**Cuba's former President Fidel Castro, bottom, back to camera, attends the inauguration of the cultural center, Studio Kcho Romerillo, Laboratory for Art, in Havana, Cuba, late Wednesday, January 8, 2014.**

(AP Photo/Cubadebate, Alex Castro)





## Blue Residences, Your Own Private Caribbean Sanctuary

**ORANJESTAD** - To have your Own Private Caribbean Sanctuary means to have your own condo with 180 degree ocean views and amazing daily sunsets on Aruba. Anyone who purchases a piece of this island at Blue Residences will have endless reasons to feel happy. Blue Residences is located within walking distance to Eagle Beach, one of the top 25 beaches of the world according to the 2013 Travelers Choice Beaches Award, according to millions of TripAdvisor travelers.

The project encompasses 124 whole-ownership units in three eight-story towers, all with 180° view of the Caribbean and just a few steps from the beach. On site amenities will include pools, snack-bar, mini market, landscaped sun-deck, fitness center, and full ser-

vice spa and concierge service.

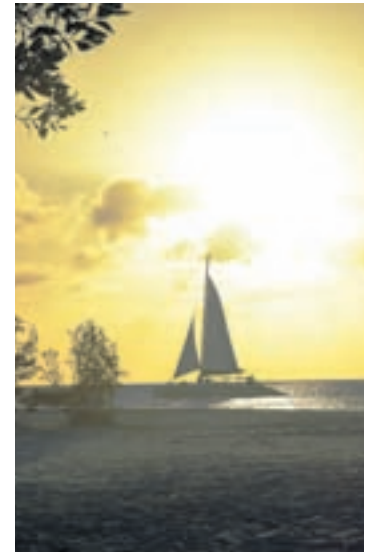
All owners receive a complementary membership in Preferred Residences, an

Sanctuary, one of the biggest reservoirs on the island, and is also within walking distance to Palm Beach, home of the high-rise lux-

Each of these towers will contain 24 two-bedroom, two-bath units; 12 three-bedroom, three-bath units; 4 three-bedroom, four-bath

machines and an assigned parking space.

Presales began in 2011 on only one tower, and, in a little over a year, 80% was sold, that's why the second tower was included as part of phase one. Now with 60% sold, the project has the structure of tower one completed, six of the eight-



optional luxury resort exchange program that offers owners "high-touch" exchange services and lifestyle benefits tailored especially for sophisticated affluent travelers.

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ury hotels with a variety of water sports concessions, casinos, restaurants, bars and shops. This location is unequalled on the island!

The project is built in two phases. First phase of construction is well underway on the 5-acre (2 hectares) site, which includes 84 units in two eight-story towers.

duplex penthouses; and 2 five-bedroom, five-and-a-half-bath duplex penthouses. A third tower and a second pool are planned for phase two, which will include 40 additional units. All units are provided with porcelain tiles, Italian kitchens, stainless steel appliances, washer and dryer

stories on tower two completed, 60% of the facade completed, and ready to start with installation of tiles and windows. The sales office is located inside the project and is open from Monday to Saturday, Sundays by appointment. Go see the amazing view from your future unit. □







## Aruba honors Stacy & Michael Krooks

**PALM BEACH** - Recently, Stacy & Michael Krooks from New Jersey were honored as Ambassadors of Goodwill after returning to Aruba for 28 years consecutive years. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit

Aruba for between 10 and 20 years consecutive. Mr. Ricardo Croes representing Aruba Tourism Authority conducted the ceremony at the Marriott Ocean Club. Stacy commented that she will never change her vacation island for any other island. Top reasons for returning provided by the

honorees were they consider Aruba to be the "Happy Island", the great weather, and Friendly Aruban Hospitality, white sand beaches and the local food. On the pictures Mr. Croes from ATA together with Stacy & Michael and hotel Reps. Erwin & Lisette at the Marriott Ocean Club. □

## Bunny would sure welcome friends and family members



**ORANJESTAD** - We would like to introduce Bunny to you, one of the donkeys that has found a home at the Aruba Donkey Sanctuary. Together with her son Maestro she was roaming the island and that is a hazardous occupation. Lots of traffic and wild dogs make life very difficult for a roaming donkey. It took quite a few tries, but finally our volunteers succeeded in capturing the two donkeys by luring them into a garden at Rooi Master. Bunny was named Bunny because of the fact that she was caught around Easter; Maestro refers to Master, as in Rooi Master. But Bunny had a treat for us: two weeks after being caught she delivered a baby boy, whom we baptized Amadeus. So here we are proudly presenting Bunny, Maestro and Amadeus, a great little donkey family. This beautiful donkey has been provided with a chip, just like all the other donkeys. On the chip is information about the donkey and its medical history. The donkeys at the sanctuary have a lot of friends with whom they can play all day long. And they love living there: they are well-cared for, they are fed and watered and when they are sick the vet is called. Yes, they are expensive customers for the sanctuary. The volunteers are trying to

cover the various costs with all kinds of activities and the sale of great donkey memorabilia in the shop. Fortunately, there are also visitors who wish to adopt a donkey, who buy something at the donkey shop or who make a donation. Thus they help support us. Everyone is welcome to visit the sanctuary, which has opening hours from 9 am until 4 pm and in the weekend from 10 am until 3. Entry is free of charge and one can enjoy a soft drink, a cup of coffee or a refreshing ice cream. The volunteers of the sanctuary are hoping that somebody will adopt this friendly, lovely donkey. Of course the donkey will keep on living at the sanctuary; you only need to pay AWG. 30,- per month for the donkey's keep. With this amount you help support the sanctuary as well as your own donkey. And you will receive a beautiful certificate and a super T-shirt and your name and photo will be posted on our website. So please call the sanctuary at 593-2933; you can also register via the website [www.arubandonkey.org](http://www.arubandonkey.org) or donate money on bank account number 40.03.025 at the Aruba Bank! Just do it! Would you like to follow the donkeys on Facebook: surf to Donkey Sanctuary Aruba please. □

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## 15 years and counting! Welcome Back Larry & Genny Pelletier!

**PALM BEACH-** Bugaloe's first guests of the week of 2014 are Larry and Genny Pelletier from New Hampshire USA. They have been coming to Aruba for 15 years and discovered the beautiful pier bar on their first visit to Aruba. Since then they just can't get enough of Bugaloe, and why should they? What they like best about Bugaloe is the staff that through the years have become real friends with Larry and Genny. Their favorite menu item is the Crab Wrap and with a few Amstel Brights their day is complete. They love visiting Aruba because what better way to spend a vacation bathing in the sun and hit the Bugaloe Bar right after? Aruba has also become their island of choice because of the friendly people, gorgeous weather and breath taking sunsets, perfect to be watched under the enjoyment of some cocktails. Their funniest memory of Bugaloe is when Genny sat on a bartender's lap while finishing her drink. Larry states: 'Aruba just makes us feel so much younger'! The Bugaloe crew would like to thank Larry and Genny for being such loyal Bugaloe guests and hope to see them for the next 15 years! □





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## NHL Capsules

# Flyers top Habs, push home streak to 10

**The Associated Press**  
**PHILADELPHIA (AP)** — Sean Couturier, Zac Rinaldo and Michael Raffl scored to lead the Philadelphia Flyers to their 10th straight home victory, 3-1 over the Montreal Canadiens on Wednesday night. The surging Flyers returned home after a 5-1 trip that sent them to fourth in the Eastern Conference. Brushing off 1-7 and 4-10-1 starts to become one of the hottest teams in the NHL, they are 9-2 since Dec. 17 and have found new life under coach Craig Berube. The Flyers haven't lost at home since Nov. 7 against New Jersey. They're on their longest home winning streak since they won 11 straight Oct. 27-Dec. 5, 2003. Steve Mason was again sensational in goal, stopping 19 shots for his 18th win. Tomas Plekanec scored for the Canadiens.

**RANGERS 3,  
BLACKHAWKS 2**



Philadelphia Flyers' Michael Raffl, center, of Austria,, battles for the puck against Montreal Canadiens' Josh Gorges, left, and Brendan Gallagher during the first period of an NHL hockey game, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2014, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Carl Hagelin broke a tie with 5:57 left to lift New York last Chicago. Marc Staal started the winning sequence with a long slap shot that was stopped by Corey Crawford, who also got in front of Hagelin's first rebound attempt. But Hagelin stayed with the play and flipped the puck into the open right side. Brad Richards and Mats Zuccarello also scored for New York, which earned its first win in Chicago since a 3-2 victory on Jan. 16, 2009. Henrik Lundqvist made 35 saves. Jonathan Toews and Brandon Bollig scored in the second period for Chicago, which had recorded at least one point in a season-high 10 games. It was the Blackhawks' first home regulation loss since a 4-3 setback against Dallas on Dec. 3.

Continued on page 19



Mini driver Joan "Nani" Roma of Spain and co-pilot Michel Perin of France race during the fifth stage of the Dakar Rally between the cities of Chilecito and San Miguel de Tucuman, Argentina, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014.

Associated Press

**TUCUMAN, Argentina (AP)** — Nani Roma of Spain avoided the mishaps suffered by his rivals to win the fifth stage of the Dakar Rally on Thursday and regain the overall lead.

The mainly sandy stage from Chilecito to Tucuman was supposed to be 400 kilometers, but was shortened by 100 kilometers because of extreme heat. Organizers prevented mo-

## Nani Roma wins fifth stage, takes Dakar lead

torbikes and quads from racing the second half of the stage out of fear for their safety.

After 4 ½ hours, Roma won his second stage of the week 4 minutes, 20 seconds ahead of Giniel De Villiers of South Africa, and 20:12 in front of third-placed Robby Gordon of the United States. Overnight leader Carlos Sainz suffered an electrical problem after 160 kilometers and lost an hour and 15 minutes to Roma.

Nasser Al-Attiyah of Qa-

tar got stuck and fell more than 26 minutes behind Roma in the overall in second place, and Orlando Terranova of Argentina was third, nearly 32 minutes down.

Defending champion Stephane Peterhansel of France took a wrong turn in the first half and dropped more than 20 minutes to be 40 minutes off the pace. Three-time champ Marc Coma of Spain, biding his time so far, burst to life on the most difficult stage yet to win the motorbike race

and take a big overall lead. Coma was 13 minutes quicker than countryman Jordi Viladom and 23 in front of Kuba Przygonski of Poland. All three are riding KTM's.

Meanwhile, Coma's chief rival, five-time and defending champ Cyril Despres of France, endured an overheated engine and navigation errors to lose 45 minutes, and Paulo Goncalves of Portugal had to drop out after his bike caught on fire, his earliest exit in his eighth Dakar. □



# Jay Gruden hired to coach Washington Redskins

**JOSEPH WHITE**  
**AP Sports Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** —

Jay Gruden has his first NFL head coaching job, charged with ending the perpetual state of turmoil that has become the Washington Redskins.

He was hired on Thursday after spending the last three seasons as the offensive coordinator of the Cincinnati Bengals, where his skill in helping to develop Andy Dalton will no doubt be of use when he takes on the task of grooming another young franchise quarterback, Robert Griffin III.

Gruden replaces Mike Shanahan, who was fired last week after a 3-13 season that ended with eight consecutive losses. The Redskins finished last in the NFC East division during three of Shanahan's four seasons in Washington, a time marked by discord among ownership, quarterback and coach.

Gruden will become Dan Snyder's eighth coach in 16 seasons as an NFL owner. The span includes four winning seasons and seven last-place finishes. Unlike Shanahan, Gruden will not have final say over all gridiron matters. He'll report to general manager Bruce Allen, who has taken charge of assembling the roster and other personnel decisions.

The 46-year-old Gruden has been largely overshadowed

by his more famous brother, Jon Gruden, who won a Super Bowl coaching the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and is now a TV analyst on "Monday Night Football." But Jay Gruden has been a name on the rise because of his success with Dalton and the Bengals' offense.

Jay Gruden interviewed for multiple head coaching openings last year and had drawn interest from at least three other teams seeking to fill a head coaching vacancy this year. He interviewed with the Tennessee Titans on Tuesday.

Gruden had an inside track on the Redskins job because of his ties within the Washington organization. He was an assistant coach with Tampa Bay from 2002-08, where he worked at various times with Allen, Redskins defensive backs coach Raheem Morris and tight ends coach Sean McVay. Gruden also coached under Redskins defensive coordinator Jim Haslett at the Florida Tuskers in 2009 in the now defunct United Football League.

Gruden played quarterback for the Barcelona Dragons and the Sacramento Surge in the long-defunct World League of American Football in 1990, then went to the Arena Football League and began a playing and coaching career that was so successful it landed him in the AFL Hall of Fame in 1999. □



New Washington Redskins head coach Jay Gruden holds a Redskins helmet at the Redskins Park in Ashburn, Va., Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014.

Associated Press

Continued from page 18

## AVALANCHE 4, SENATORS 3, OT

**DENVER (AP)** — Paul Stastny had the tying goal and two assists and Tyson Barrie scored 33 seconds into overtime to complete Colorado's comeback victory over Ottawa.

Jan Hejda and Jamie McGinn also scored for Colo-

rado.

The Avalanche were down 3-2 in the third and pressed for the tying goal. John Mitchell nearly tied it when his shot went off the inside of the right post. Stastny tied it moments later when he deked goalie Craig Anderson with 2:20 left.

Clarke MacArthur had a goal and an assist for Ottawa, and Jason Spezza and Kyle Turris also scored. □



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**NBA Capsules**

# Nets end Warriors' winning streak at 10

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Joe Johnson scored 27 points in the Brooklyn Nets' season-high fourth straight victory, a 102-98 win Wednesday night that snapped the Golden State Warriors' 10-game winning streak and prevented the first 7-0 road trip in NBA history.

Kevin Garnett scored 11 of his 13 points in the final quarter and stole Stephen Curry's pass with the Warriors down three in the final half-minute.

Shaun Livingston made the tiebreaking free throw with 1:12 left when he appeared to get away with hooking Curry, then Johnson made four in a row for just enough breathing room to allow the Nets to remain unbeaten in 2014.

Curry scored 34 points for the Warriors, who were bidding for a franchise-record 11th consecutive victory. But until Curry's jumper with 5.8 seconds to go, they didn't make a field goal after Klay Thompson's 3-pointer with 4:07 remaining that gave them a 93-89 lead.

HAWKS 97, PACERS 87

**ATLANTA (AP)** — Kyle Korver scored 17 points, Pero Antic added 16 and Atlanta



**Houston Rockets' James Harden (13) goes up for a dunk as Los Angeles Lakers' Ryan Kelly (4) and Jeremy Lin (7) look on in the second half of an NBA basketball game on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2014, in Houston. Harden scored 38 points in the Rockets' 113-99 win.**

**Associated Press**

ta raced to a big lead before holding off weary Indiana and beating the team

with the NBA's best record. The Hawks snapped a three-game losing streak

and extended Indiana's misery at Philips Arena, where the Pacers (28-7) haven't won since 2006. They dropped their 12th in a row in Atlanta, the team's longest active road losing streak against any team.

Indiana looked very much like a squad playing its fourth game in five nights and also had dealt with travel issues because of the arctic weather. The Pacers managed just 12 points in the first quarter and 32 in the opening half — both season lows.

Paul George led Indiana with 28 points.

**CLIPPERS 111, CELTICS 105**  
**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Blake Griffin scored 29 points, Jamal Crawford added 26, and Los Angeles defeated Boston to improve to 16-3 at home.

Jared Dudley scored 18 points and Darren Collison had 15 points, six assists and five rebounds in place of the injured Chris Paul. DeAndre Jordan had 11 points and 13 rebounds in giving Clippers coach Doc Rivers a second win over his old team this season. Los Angeles improved to 12-10 without Paul in the

lineup since he arrived in 2011. He's out six weeks with a separated right shoulder.

Jordan Crawford and Avery Bradley scored 24 points each in Boston's sixth straight loss overall and ninth in 10 games. The Celtics have dropped six in a row on the road while continuing to struggle without the injured Rajon Rondo, who has a torn ACL in his right knee.

**SUNS 104, TIMBERWOLVES 103**

**MINNEAPOLIS (AP)** — Goran Dragic had 26 points, nine assists and six rebounds and Gerald Green's baseline jumper with 3.9 seconds left to help Phoenix stun Minnesota. The Suns (21-13) trailed by six points with just over 90 seconds to play, but closed the game on a 7-0 run for maybe their most improbable win yet. Channing Frye scored 22 points and hit five 3-pointers, and Green finished with 14 points for Phoenix, which was playing the second game of a back-to-back. Kevin Martin scored 20 points for the Wolves, but his runner at the buzzer clanked off the rim. □



**Carolina Panthers' Cam Newton (1) celebrates his touchdown pass against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the first half of an NFL football game in Charlotte, N.C., Sunday, Dec. 1, 2013.**

**Associated Press**

STEVE REED

AP Sports Writer

**CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (AP)** — Cam Newton doesn't like being compared to Colin Kaepernick. "Two different players," Newton said.

Yet the Carolina Panthers' third-year quarterback certainly understands the

parallels with his San Francisco 49ers counterpart. They both entered the NFL in 2011. They're both big, strong-armed guys who can shred a secondary with their arms and terrorize a front seven with their feet.

"Being a big guy, being fast and being agile and

## Newton on Kaepernick: 'Two different players'

having the art of throwing like only God has blessed a few people with — and Kaepernick has it (too)," Newton said.

Newton and Kaepernick go head-to-head on Sunday with a trip to the NFC Championship game on the line. It's their second meeting this season.

Carolina beat San Francisco 10-9 in a defensive struggle on Nov. 10 at Candlestick Park, a game in which neither quarterback played particularly well.

Both are out to change that in the divisional playoffs. "I'm not preparing for Colin Kaepernick," Newton said. "What he does on Sunday will not make any difference to me — other than if he does score I will

have to respond. And if I score he will have to respond." Newton and Kaepernick shared a room at the scouting combine in Indianapolis leading up to the 2011 NFL draft.

Both were kept busy by the onslaught of interview requests from teams and barely had a chance to interact. A few months later, Newton was drafted first overall by the Panthers, while Kaepernick fell to the 49ers in the second round and was selected 36th overall.

Kaepernick was the first to get his team to the Super Bowl, leading the 49ers there last year in his first season as a starter before ultimately losing to the Baltimore Ravens.

Newton started for the Panthers right away, and was selected to the Pro Bowl ahead of Kaepernick. But all of that means little to Newton.

"I feel as if I haven't achieved anything worth mentioning yet," Newton said. In Newton's eyes there's only one goal at the end of this season: Bringing home Carolina's first Super Bowl.

"Nothing is worth mentioning unless we have something that we can all share with each other for years and years to come," Newton said.

Coach Ron Rivera said Newton's maturity this season has been evident with his ability to handle pressure on and off the field. □



# Without Vonn, U.S. speed team needs to find top gear



In this Feb. 17, 2010, file photo, Lindsey Vonn of the United States, reacts in the finish area after completing the Women's downhill at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Whistler, British Columbia. Associated Press

ERIC WILLEMSEN  
Associated Press

**ALTENMARKT-ZAUCHENSEE, Austria (AP)** — Less than five weeks before the Sochi Olympics downhill, the U.S. women's Alpine ski team is still trying to click into gear. Going into Saturday's World Cup race in Austria, the team is looking for its first top-10 result of the season in downhill — a sharp contrast to last year, when six American speed skiers reached the podium at least once. "Last year, they pushed themselves to a different level," coach Alex Hoedlmoser said. "This year we are not there yet but we know why we are not there yet. We targeted those areas and it is going to be better." Results, however, won't easily improve without Lindsey Vonn, who has curtailed her brief season to undergo surgery again on her injured right knee and will miss the Olympics. A five-time World Cup downhill champion and 2010 Olympic gold medalist, Vonn has been the stand-out performer of the team for a long time. Julia Mancuso, runner-up to her teammate in the downhill at the Vancouver Games, said they're missing Vonn not just for her results but also for inspiration. "Lindsey is so consistent," Mancuso said. "So knowing that someone from the U.S.

team will always be good, helps the team. ... Having a good, positive environment, people winning, it all helps the team spirit. I am sure we are missing that a little." Struggling with the aftermath of two torn ligaments, Vonn started in just four of the seven World Cup speed races before being forced to sit out the rest of the season. Still, her best results — 11th in downhill and fifth in super-G, both in Lake Louise — are unmatched by any of her teammates. Leanne Smith finished sixth in the same super-G but no American was a threat to the winner in any race. Stacey Cook's best result in downhill this season is 12th, for Smith it's 14th, for Mancuso 20th and for Laurene Ross 22nd. Coming back from a shattered right leg, Alice McKennis came 43rd in Val d'Isere. Like Vonn, she is going to miss the Olympics. "She had such a tough injury last year, she is not going to be ready," said Hoedlmoser, adding that McKennis won't race in Austria this weekend either. Still, Hoedlmoser is confident that results will improve soon. "We have still some girls that can be on the podium," he said. "We prepare them like we would have prepared if Lindsey would have been

around. So there is not really any changes. ... We have still a strong team and we get them as ready as possible." Asked about the reasons for his team being collectively out-of-form, Hoedlmoser said, without elaborating, "there has been some internal stuff that we know that happened and that we don't really want to present to everybody." According to Mancuso, "it's really hard to explain" what the team has been going through. "Everyone has been skiing really well, it's just a matter of doing it in the races," Mancuso said. "It's really something that is hard to put your finger on. Sometimes when you get off track, it's hard to get back on." Despite Vonn's and McKennis' injuries, the team spirit has been as good as last season, Cook said. "As a team we are the same, win or lose, and that's something that has helped us get better and better," Cook said. "We kind of keep our own mindset in our own little group, it's pretty positive and fun and the results will come." Cook, runner-up to Vonn in two consecutive downhills last season, said the impact of the champion's absence shouldn't be overrated. "We miss her, we wish her well, but it's also a part of

the sport," Cook said. "Everyone has gone through (injuries)." Even if the results don't reflect it, Cook feels her skiing has improved. For her, it's not just about winning. "I am old enough that I can look at smaller things than just results," Cook said. "There has just been a few races that it hasn't come together but I am so confident in the way I am skiing. My super-G is better than it ever has been. There is a lot

of positives and you want them to come together at the right time." With the Feb. 12 downhill and Feb. 15 super-G in Sochi looming, Hoedlmoser avoids panicking. "They are skiing well," he said. "Now it's just time to punch in some results, to get some confidence back, dial in the equipment, do the last pieces in that direction. I think we're all going to be OK." □



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SEASON 2013-2014



# Kvitova loses in Sydney semis; del Potro advances

**SYDNEY (AP)** — Bulgarian qualifier Tsvetana Pironkova reached her first WTA final by beating second-seeded Petra Kvitova 6-4, 6-3 in the semifinals of the Sydney International on Thursday.

Kvitova, the 2011 Wimbledon champion, was broken twice in the first set and four times in the second against Pironkova, who finished last season ranked No. 108.

"First time into a WTA final — it's an amazing feeling," said the 26-year-old Pironkova. "I've been waiting for this for a long time." Pironkova lost to Kvitova in the 2011 quarterfinals at Wimbledon after losing in the semis the year before at the All-England Club.

With qualifiers and main draw, she has now won seven consecutive matches in Sydney and is aiming for No. 8 in the final, where she'll meet fifth-seeded Angelique Kerber, who beat American Madison Keys 6-4, 6-2 in the other semifinal Thursday.

In the men's tournament, top-seeded Juan Martin del Potro beat Czech veteran Radek Stepanek 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to set up a semi-



**Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina plays a forehand shot in his quarterfinals match against Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic during the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014.**

**Associated Press**

nal against Russia's Dmitry Tursunov.

Del Potro, the 2009 U.S. Open champion who finished last season ranked No. 5, relied on his strong serve, with 14 aces to three, and saved seven of 10 break points.

Tursunov earned a 7-6 (5), 6-2 win over Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan. Defending

champion Bernard Tomic beat Alexandr Dolgoplov of Ukraine 6-4, 6-3 in a night quarterfinal.

John Isner reached the semifinals of the ATP's Heineken Open in Auckland, New Zealand after a 6-7 (4), 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5) win over fifth-seeded Philipp Kohlschreiber in a match between former champi-

ons.

The quarterfinal match between third-seeded Isner, the 2010 Auckland champion, and No. 22-ranked Kohlschreiber, the 2008 winner and beaten finalist last year, lasted 2 hours, 24 minutes and contained no breaks of serve.

Playing on an injured ankle, Isner finally clinched the match with a vital point against serve in the third-set tiebreak.

"I played against a gutsy opponent so I knew I had to give everything I had," Isner said. "It wasn't that pretty for either of us and a lot of times, when I'm playing guys as good as him, the match comes down to a point here or there. I got a little bit lucky today."

Isner served 18 aces, put 83 percent of first serves in play and won 82 percent of first serve points.

Isner will next play Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut, who beat American wildcard entry Jack Sock 6-1, 6-3 in a rain-interrupted match.

David Ferrer moved closer to his fifth singles title in Auckland when he beat Spanish compatriot Guillermo Garcia Lopez 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 in a night match.

In the WTA event at Hobart, top-seeded Sam Stosur reached the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-2 win over No. 34-ranked Bojana Jovanovski of Serbia.

"Everything's moving in the right direction, that's for sure, but there's still room for improvement," Stosur said. The 2011 U.S. Open champion next faces seventh-seeded Klara Zakopalova of the Czech Republic, who beat American Alison Riske 6-4, 7-5.

In the exhibition tournament at Kooyong, the former Australian Open venue in Melbourne, No. 7-ranked Tomas Berdych advanced to the final with a 6-4, 6-1 win over Kei Nishikori of Japan. Berdych, who opened the tournament with a straight sets win over Fernando Verdasco, will next play the winner of Friday's all-French semifinal between Richard Gasquet and Gilles Simon.

No. 8-ranked Stanislas Wawrinka withdrew from the eight-man invitational tournament earlier Thursday citing fatigue following his title win at Chennai last week. He was replaced in the draw by Russia's Mikhail Youzhny. □

# Hitzlsperger hopes to make coming out easier



**In this picture taken Nov. 17, 2007 Germany's Thomas Hitzlsperger goes with the ball during the Group D Euro 2008 qualifying soccer match between Germany and Cyprus in Hannover, northern Germany.**

**Associated Press**

**CIARAN FAHEY**  
**Associated Press**

**BERLIN (AP)** — Encouraged by others who have come out as gay, retired footballer Thomas Hitzlsperger is hoping going public will help make it easier for other sporting stars to do the same. Homosexuality is seen as a major taboo in some sports, while not so much in others.

Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova, both openly gay, are two of the greatest tennis players in history. But big-time professional football, and the four major sports in the United States, are quite a different story — at least for now. "(There is) a long way to go because we fear a reaction and we don't know what will happen. I can't imagine playing football and doing this

at the same time," Hitzlsperger said in an interview with BBC Radio 4 on Thursday. Hitzlsperger, no longer active but still regarded as the biggest name in football to say he is gay, spent years playing professionally in England, Germany and Italy. He also represented Germany at the 2006 World Cup.

His decision to go public was hailed overwhelmingly as a positive step in the German media as well as in England, reflecting the way attitudes have changed. British tabloid The Sun labeled him a "Winner" in a side-by-side cover photo with Manchester United defender Chris Smalling, who was called the "Loser" for wearing an outfit resembling a suicide bomber for a costume party.

In Germany, Hitzlsperger has been commended for his courage. "Hopefully, by talking about it, it encourages some others, because they see they can still be professional football players, they can play at the highest level, and be gay," Hitzlsperger said in a video on his website. Using anti-gay slurs and jokes on the sports field has been widely accepted as part of playing hard for years, so much so that in 1999 former Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler made lewd anti-gay gestures during a game toward Graeme Le Saux, who was playing for Chelsea. Le Saux, who is straight, was labeled a homosexual by many simply because he used to read the left-leaning Guardian newspaper. □



# IBM's Watson gets its own business , new home

BREE FOWLER

AP Technology Writer

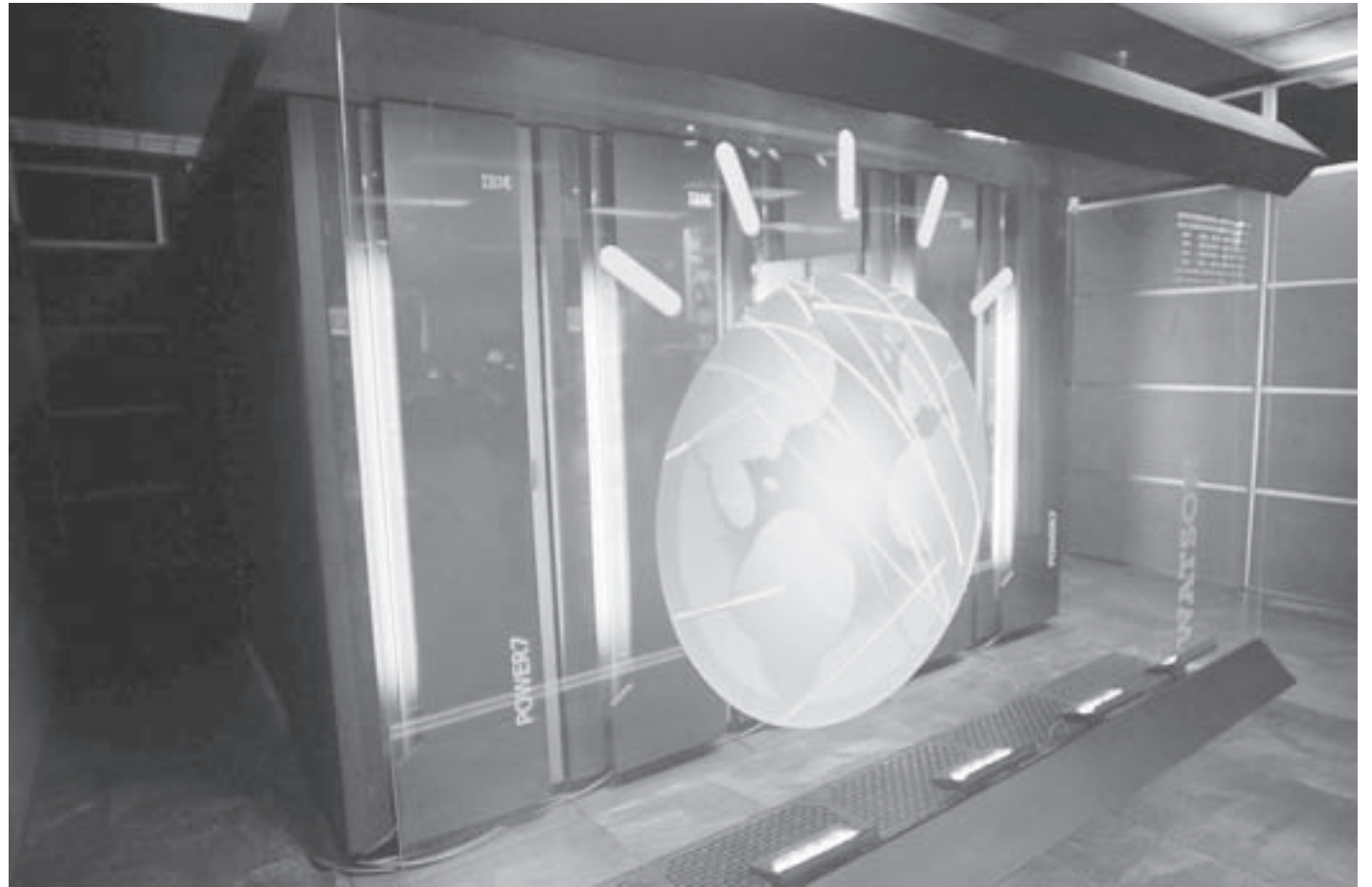
**NEW YORK (AP)** — One of the most famous "Jeopardy!" champs of all time is moving to Manhattan.

IBM announced Thursday that it's investing more than \$1 billion to give its Watson cloud computing system its own business division and a new home in New York City.

The Armonk, New York-based computing company said the new business unit will be dedicated to the development and commercialization of the project that first gained fame by defeating a pair of "Jeopardy!" champions, including 74-time winner Ken Jennings, in 2011.

In the years since Watson's TV appearance, IBM has been developing the computing system for more practical purposes and changed it to a cloud-based service. While still in the development phase, Watson's massive analytical capabilities are currently being used in industries ranging from health care to banking. IBM CEO Ginni Rometty said what makes Watson unique is that it isn't programmed like most computers. Instead of relying only on the information that's put into it, Watson learns by "reading" vast amounts of information and combining it with the results of previous work to find answers to problems — which she says makes it ideal for the reams of data now involved in many industries.

IBM is building a new headquarters for the business on the edge of New York City's East Village near New York University and other technology companies. In addition to its marketing and engineering capabilities, the new headquarters also will provide a



This Jan. 13, 2011 file photo provided by IBM shows the IBM computer system known as Watson.

Associated Press

place for IBM to collaborate with clients and startup companies that are building apps for Watson. IBM will invest about \$100 million in various startup companies working on Watson projects. Rometty said at an event announcing the move Thursday in New York that it's those collaborations with startups and clients that will help find new uses for the Watson technology.

Eventually the business, which started out as a team of 27 people, will employ about 2,000, with several hundred set to move into the new headquarters.

One of the first fields to use Watson was health care.

Dr. Jose Baselga, physician-in-chief of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, attended

Thursday's event. He said Watson has helped his doctors deal with the skyrocketing amount of information involved in the treatment of cancer.

Meanwhile, others see the potential for using Watson in industries such as retail and travel.

Terry Jones, a founder of the travel websites Travelocity.com and Kayak.com, also attended the event. He said that while Internet search engines have become the method of choice for booking travel, they can't yet provide the expert advice about particular destinations and travel activities that an old-fashioned travel agent can. He said Watson's ability to understand language allows it to search travel blogs, books and newspapers to

help answer users' questions.

Michael Rhodin, a long-time IBM executive named to lead the new business, said the New York City headquarters is meant to be a departure from the project's current research facility's sleepier surroundings about 40 miles (65 kilometers) north of the city in Yorktown Heights, New York.

The angular glass building also will stand out from the rest of its neighborhood, which is home to some of the oldest buildings in the city.

Rhodin said the move will help it attract young talent that expects Silicon Valley style.

"The millennial generation gets this, they understand what this is," Rhodin said. "This is a departure. It's a statement on our part." □

## TV-on-Internet service Aereo gets \$34M in funding

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Aereo, a Barry Diller-backed startup that provides broadcast television channels over the Internet for a monthly fee, says it has secured \$34 million in additional funding from outside investors.

The money will help Aereo expand beyond the 10 metropolitan ar-

reas it currently serves. It will also allow Aereo to develop apps for additional devices, such as Internet-connected TVs and game consoles, while battling copyright-infringement lawsuits filed by broadcasters.

The additional funding was announced on the sidelines of the International CES gadget show

in Las Vegas.

In an interview, CEO Chet Kanojia says the two new investors will be able to offer Aereo advice and contacts: Gordon Crawford is a veteran media investor, while investment firm Himalaya Capital offers international experience as Aereo explores markets beyond the U.S. □



In this Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012, file photo, Chet Kanojia, founder and CEO of Aereo, Inc., shows a tablet displaying his company's technology, in New York.

Associated Press



## Mixed close on Wall Street; S&P 500 edges up

**KEN SWEET**  
**AP Markets Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The stock market wavered for a second day Thursday as investors weighed disap-

appointed investors, who have been seeing signs for several weeks that the U.S. economy was improving and that shoppers were returning to the malls.

what's going on?" Even the bright spots in the retail industry had caveats. Department store giant Macy's jumped \$3.96, or 8 percent, to \$55.80 after the

The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell by 15,000 last week to 330,000. The drop was slightly bigger than economists predicted,



**Specialist Michael Shearin, foreground center, works at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The stock market wavered for a second day Thursday as investors weighed disappointing news from the retail industry against more positive signals on the U.S. economy.**

pointing news from the retail industry against more positive signals on the U.S. economy.

Investors were looking ahead to Friday's jobs report, as well as the start of corporate earnings season. Retailers were among the hardest hit stocks on Thursday.

Bed Bath & Beyond plunged \$9.93, or 13 percent, to \$69.75 and Family Dollar fell \$1.37, or 2 percent, to \$64.97, making them the biggest decliners in the S&P 500. Both companies cut their earnings forecasts following a disappointing holiday season. The reports of tepid sales

It appears that the economy, while improving, still has some weak spots.

L Brands, which owns Bath and Body Works and Victoria's Secret, reported that its sales rose less than analysts had expected. The company also cut its full-year outlook, echoing Bed Bath and Beyond and Family Dollar. L Brands fell \$2.44, or 4 percent, to \$57.75.

"The consumers are supposed to be the fuel of this economy, and it doesn't appear to be happening," said Ian Winer, director of trading for Wedbush Securities. "If they're not spending money at the retailers,

company forecast a 2014 profit that was above Wall Street's forecasts. At the same time, Macy's said it would eliminate 2,500 jobs as part of a reorganization that aims to save \$100 million a year.

At the close of trading, the Dow Jones industrial average fell 17.98 points, or 0.1 percent, to 16,444.76. The S&P 500 added 0.64 points, or less than 0.1 percent, to 1,838.13 and the Nasdaq composite lost 9.42 points, or 0.2 percent, to 4,156.19. The disappointing news from retailers was more than enough to offset another positive report on the U.S. economy.

according to FactSet, a financial data provider. The claims report sets the stage for the government jobs report for December, which will be released Friday morning. Economists expect employers added 196,000 jobs last month.

In company news, Ford rose 30 cents, or 2 percent, to \$15.84 after announcing an increase in its quarterly dividend to 12.5 cents per share from 10 cents per share. The news came a day after the stock gained 1 percent on word that Ford's widely respected CEO, Alan Mulally, would not leave to run Microsoft. □

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

## Oil falls to 8 month low, natural gas drops 5 pct.

**The Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The price of oil closed at the lowest level in eight months Thursday as traders worried about bulging supplies of crude oil and falling demand for gasoline.

Meanwhile, natural gas prices fell by 5 percent on forecasts for warmer than normal U.S. weather in the coming weeks.

Benchmark U.S. oil for February delivery fell 67 cents to close at \$91.66 on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The price did rise back above \$92 in electronic trading after the close, perhaps piggybacking on a move by U.S. stocks into positive territory. On Wednesday, the U.S. Energy Department said supplies of gasoline rose by 6.2 million barrels last week, a jump of nearly 3 percent. Platts, the energy information arm of McGraw-Hill, said the data indicated that demand for gasoline was the lowest in a year. At the same time, U.S. production of crude oil is the highest in more than 25 years, and supplies "are near the upper limit of the average range for this time of year," the Energy Department said.

As of the close, oil is down nearly 7 percent so far this year. Natural gas futures plunged 21 cents, or 5 percent, to \$4.01 per 1,000 cubic feet. Natural gas last closed below \$4 on Dec. 4. With the U.S. pulling out from a recent spell of extremely cold weather, forecasts are starting to warm up. "Some of these outlooks are tilting increasingly in favor of warmer than normal trends in some parts of the upper mid-continent," wrote Jim Ritterbusch, president of Ritterbusch and Associates, in a note to clients.

Brent crude, used to set prices for international varieties of crude, dropped 76 cents to \$106.39 on the ICE Futures exchange in London. □

## Ford board raises quarterly dividend 25 percent

**DEARBORN, Michigan (AP)** — Ford Motor Co. is raising the quarterly dividend it pays shareholders for the second time since restoring the payout in 2012.

The second-largest U.S. automaker said Thursday its board declared a first-quarter dividend of 12.5 cents per share, a 25 percent increase from the previous 10-cent payout. The

new dividend is payable on March 3 to shareholders of record at the close of business on Jan. 31.

Dearborn-based Ford stopped paying a dividend in 2006, a year in which it lost \$12.6 billion. After a restructuring, it returned to profitability in 2009. Ford restored its quarterly dividend at 5 cents per share in the first quarter of 2012

and doubled that dividend a year later. The announcement comes a few days after CEO Alan Mulally said he planned to stay with the automaker at least through the end of this year. Mulally was rumored to be in the running to become Microsoft Corp.'s next CEO. Ford shares rose 27 cents, or 1.7 percent, to \$15.81 in late morning trading. The larg-

est U.S. automaker, General Motors Co., hasn't paid a dividend since 2008. But CEO Dan Akerson recently hinted one is coming soon. Akerson told reporters last month that since GM has retired preferred stock that carried high dividend rates and payments, it now has enough money to maintain capital spending and reward shareholders. □



## 30 percent of M&A fees went to smaller firms through 2013

DAVID GELLES

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The big investment banks, most notably Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase, continue to take the majority of fees from advising on mergers and acquisitions. But boutique and independent investment banks continue to gain on them.

In 2013, boutiques and independents earned a combined 30 percent of fees for completed transactions, according to Thomson Reuters, the most since it began keeping track in 2000. The figure was a big jump from 2011, when it was about 25 percent, and was almost double what it was a decade ago, at about 15 percent. In 2012, the number was 28 percent.

With global M&A advisory fees topping \$19.1 billion in 2013, that means boutiques and independents collectively earned \$5.73 billion for their work. By contrast, the four top banks - Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley and Bank of America Merrill Lynch - collected nearly \$5 billion in fees combined. But overall fees from M&A deals were down 12 percent in the year, so boutiques and independents were getting a larger slice of a smaller pie.

As the top banks continue to hold their own, and boutiques and independents continue to gain market share, it is the second-tier big banks that are getting squeezed. Barclays, UBS and Deutsche Bank all posted double-digit percentage declines in advisory revenue last year, according to Thomson Reuters. Credit Suisse was hit hardest, with a 36 percent drop.

The Thomson Reuters numbers are estimates, and banks at times dispute their accuracy. Nonetheless, the figures provide a snapshot of an M&A advisory world in flux.

Boutiques and independents have been taking share in part because companies and boards are seeking high-quality independent advice rather than just big balance sheets to finance their deals.

"We're in a period where trust is paramount on important decisions," said Antonio Weiss, global head of investment banking for Lazard, which took the most fees of any independent or boutique, at \$662 million. "Trust is something you build over a long period of time, but you can lose quickly. For firms focused on client relationships, that's been an advantage."

In addition to advising on many of the smaller deals that make up the so-called middle market, boutiques and independents continued to break into the upper echelons of M&A advisory work. In 2013, at least one was involved in almost all of the biggest deals of the year. In the largest transaction of the year - Verizon Communications' \$130 billion buyout of the stake in Verizon Wireless it did not already own from Vodafone - Guggenheim Securities and Paul J. Taubman, the former Morgan Stanley banker who helped strike the original deal, advised Verizon.

In the second-largest deal of the year, Lazard was the lead adviser to 3G Capital and Berkshire Hathaway in their \$23 billion purchase of H.J. Heinz. Meanwhile, Centerview Partners, a private advisory shop, advised the seller.

The third- and fourth-largest deals of 2013 also involved boutiques and independents. Moelis & Co. advised Omnicom on its merger with Publicis, while Publicis was advised by Rothschild. And Evercore Partners advised the board of Dell as it considered going private, while LionTree Advisors and Centerview advised the buyer group. Boutiques and independents are often brought in to provide fairness opinions, offering a measure of independence to deals where a bulge-bracket bank might be the lead adviser. □

## Alcoa posts \$2.3B loss on write-downs

DAVID KOENIG

AP Business Writer

**DALLAS (AP)** — Alcoa Inc. reported a \$2.34 billion fourth-quarter loss as it wrote down the value of years-old aluminum-smelting acquisitions to shift its focus to more profitable businesses.

An adjusted measure of profit fell short of Wall Street expectations as revenue fell 5 percent to \$5.59 billion. Shares slid 3.7 percent to \$10.30 in aftermarket trading. Alcoa is struggling with stubbornly weak aluminum prices — in the quarter, the company was paid an average of 7 percent less for the metal than it received in the same period a year earlier. The company is hoping that demand for aluminum in airplanes and autos will help boost prices. It predicted that overall demand would grow 7

percent this year, the same as in 2013.

Alcoa has idled one-sixth of its smelting capacity. It sees a brighter future in its segments that produce rolled aluminum and engineered products, which accounted for 57 percent of company revenue in 2013.

In the fourth quarter, the company's loss equaled \$2.19 per share. A year earlier, the company earned \$242 million, or 21 cents per share.

The company said Thursday that without the smelting write-downs, restructuring charges and other special items, it would have earned 4 cents per share. Analysts were expecting 6 cents per share.

Its \$5.59 billion in revenue beat the forecast of \$5.36 billion from analysts surveyed by FactSet.

The company released fourth-quarter results just hours after announcing that a joint venture pleaded guilty to bribing officials in Bahrain. The affiliate and Alcoa agreed to pay \$384 million in penalties.

Separately, a joint venture of which Alcoa owns 60 percent admitted bribing officials in Bahrain through a London-based middleman. The affiliate, Alcoa World Alumina LLC, will pay \$223 million in fines and criminal penalties for violating a federal law against bribing foreign officials, and the parent company agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$161 million for related violations of Securities and Exchange Commission rules.

In 2012, Alcoa settled related claims by state-controlled Aluminum Bahrain for \$85 million. □



Alcoa Warrick Operations employee Fred Westbrook inspects the finished rolls of aluminum as they come off the last stage of the production line in Newburgh, Ind. Alcoa Inc. reported quarterly financial results after the market closed on Thursday, January 9, 2014.

(AP Photo/Daniel R. Patmore)

## PCs cap worst-ever sales year with 4Q drop

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

A new report says personal computer sales slipped even further during the holiday shopping season, capping the worst annual decline in the PC industry's history.

The research firm Gartner Inc. estimates worldwide PC shipments for the three months ending in Decem-

ber dropped 7 percent from the same time in 2012. It marks the seventh consecutive quarter of decreasing PC sales.

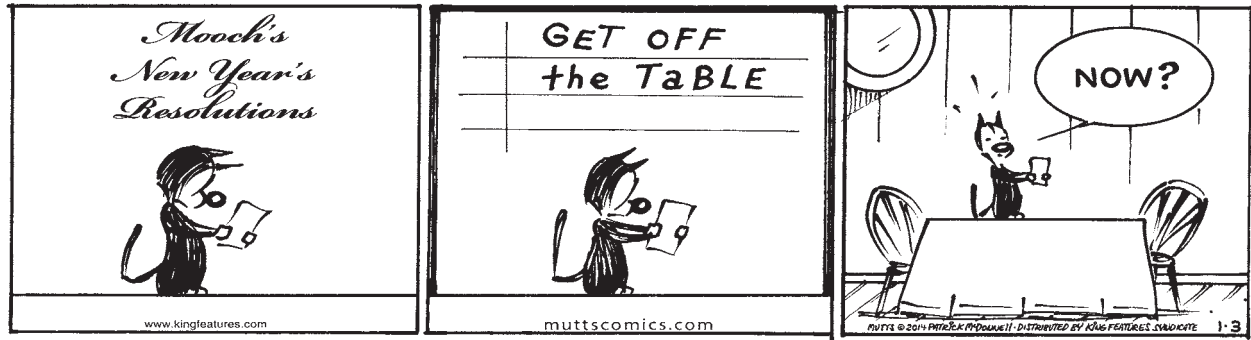
For all of last year, PC sales plunged 10 percent. Shipments of desktop and laptop computers have never tumbled so dramatically. The numbers released Thursday show

annual PC shipments have now backtracked to where they stood in 2009.

The PC slump is driven by the growing popularity of less expensive and more convenient mobile devices controlled by touch-screen technology instead of keyboards and computer mice. □



Mutts



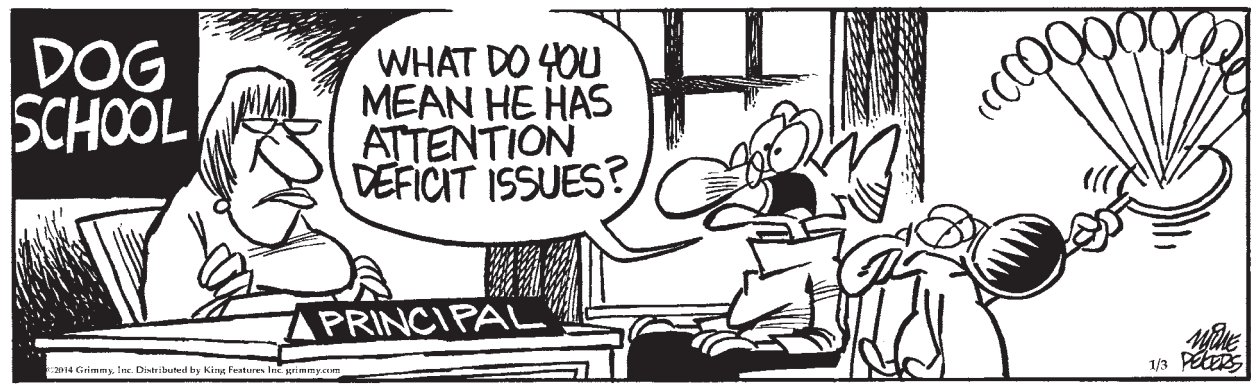
6 Chix



Blondie



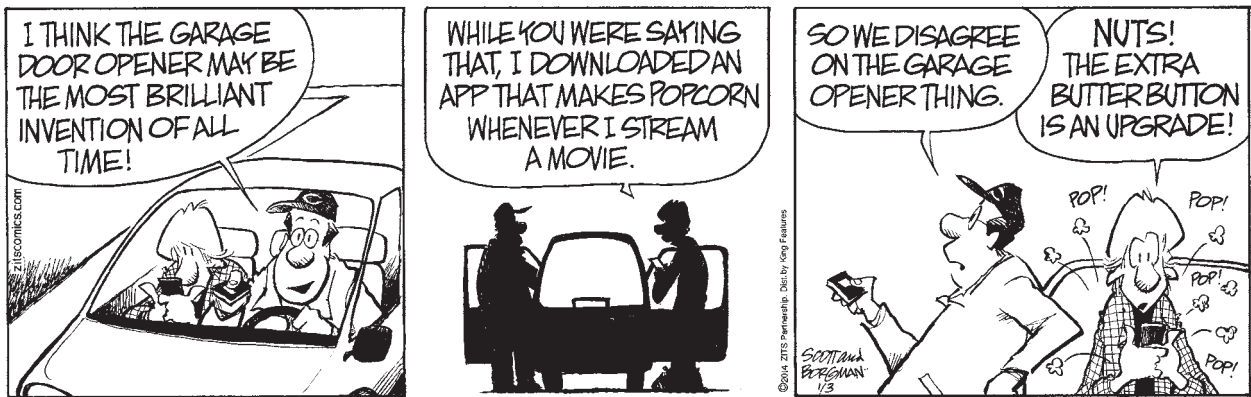
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	7					6		
3			9		2	7	4	
							9	5
	8			9			7	
			6		4			
	9			5			8	
5	1							
	4	6	5		9			3
		2					1	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 1/03

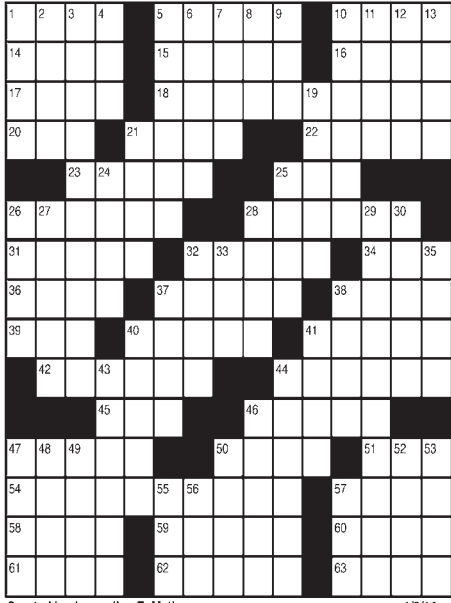
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

5	8	7	9	2	4	1	3	6
2	6	1	8	7	3	9	5	4
9	4	3	6	5	1	2	8	7
7	5	2	1	4	6	8	9	3
3	1	6	5	9	8	4	7	2
8	9	4	2	3	7	5	6	1
1	3	9	4	6	5	7	2	8
6	2	8	7	1	9	3	4	5
4	7	5	3	8	2	6	1	9

ACROSS

- 1 Disease-causing microorganism
- 5 Tiny European nation
- 10 Pleased
- 14 Hawaiian island
- 15 Once more
- 16 Cartoon bear
- 17 Hat's edge
- 18 Noisy brawl
- 20 Hotel
- 21 Lion's neck hair
- 22 Stove
- 23 Opponent
- 25 Feline
- 26 Take for granted
- 28 Nativity scene figurine
- 31 Game that is often state-run
- 32 Entreaties
- 34 "\_\_\_ Van Winkle"
- 36 \_\_\_ and cons
- 37 Armada
- 38 Sandwich shop
- 39 Title for Marco Rubio: abbr.
- 40 Hang limply
- 41 Long gun
- 42 Go over again
- 44 Under \_\_\_; while being forced
- 45 TV's "\_\_\_ Got a Secret"
- 46 Actor Lawford
- 47 "Likewise!"
- 50 Former Iranian leader's title
- 51 Golfer Ernie \_\_\_
- 54 Senseless
- 57 Make a tiny cut
- 58 "Groovy!" to today's kids
- 59 Pay hike
- 60 Pinnacle
- 61 Discontinues
- 62 Run \_\_\_; chase
- 63 No longer here



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 1/3/14

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

ITS	STABS	ZETA
ROAM	THREE	OVEN
ERGO	ROMAN	DEAD
NARCISSUS	INKY	
SAKE	IRA	
ADHERE	IMBECILE	
ORALS	SCOLD	BIN
RAPS	SPICE	ISLE
TIP	PRANK	STEAM
ANYTHING	CHANCY	
OIL	TOOL	
YOGA	ADORATION	
EVES	NADIR	ANEW
LENT	KNOBS	NEAR
PREY	AGREE	STY

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- 4 Large colorful flower, for short
- 5 Señora in Paris
- 6 Terrible pain
- 7 Walkway
- 8 Can material
- 9 \_\_\_ day now; pretty soon
- 10 Whirl around
- 11 Crazy as a \_\_\_
- 12 Very eager
- 13 Levee
- 19 Orchestra section
- 21 Short note
- 24 Party treat
- 25 Winter garment
- 26 Mountain range in Europe
- 27 More resentful
- 28 Army vehicle
- 29 First choice
- 30 Beverly \_\_\_, CA
- 32 Farm vehicle
- 33 Zodiac lion
- 35 Eskimo \_\_\_; ice cream treats
- 37 On the house
- 38 Urgent

DOWN

- 1 Large Asian desert
- 2 Make money
- 3 Imitation gem

- 40 Chunk of turf
- 41 Babe \_\_\_ of baseball
- 43 Blood pressure, pulse, etc.
- 44 Card distributor
- 46 \_\_\_ out; get rid of gradually
- 47 Chop finely
- 48 Common metal
- 49 \_\_\_ on; trampled
- 50 In a \_\_\_; miffed
- 52 Peru's capital
- 53 Drove too fast
- 55 Lyricist \_\_\_ Gershwin
- 56 Bumpkin
- 57 Unhappy



# Airlines

Continued from Page 6

American's old 757 will be replaced by one of 460 new single-aisle jets that the airline ordered in July 2011 — the largest single airplane order in history. The first one entered service on Sept. 16, and American is currently taking delivery of an additional new plane every week — models like the A321 from Airbus or the Boeing 737.

Southwest Airlines, JetBlue Airways, Spirit Airlines and just about every other U.S. carrier has a large order in place. Nearly 1,500 new planes will be delivered to U.S. airlines by Airbus and Boeing over the next decade. Several hundred smaller regional jets are also on order with other manufacturers.

"We are producing twice as many airplanes today as we were 10 years ago," says Mary Prettyman, Airbus' vice president of strategic marketing for the Americas. It will take Airbus eight years to fill all its current orders. "It's unprecedented." The new planes cater to passengers' changing habits. Instead of reading a paperback book or magazine from the airport gift shop, travelers today are surfing the Internet or reading on their Kindle or iPads. American designed the interior of its new planes with the concept that "your life should never be interrupted because you are flying," says Alice Liu, managing director for onboard products for the airline. So this new generation of planes provide passengers with larger overhead bins, power outlets and USB ports, better lighting and a less-claustrophobic feel. There's also less noise and — in many cases — individual TVs. □

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Oceanfront \$27500  
3 BEDRM \$27000  
Plat Plus Holiday 51  
OV -\$42k  
Plat Plus NY 52 OV- \$49k  
GOLD Season  
OS \$10k OV \$9500  
Oceanfront \$17k  
3 BEDRM OV \$17,000

## Marriott Aruba Ocean Club

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Oceanfront PLAT \$29k  
Platinum 1B OV \$11,500  
Gold season 2B OV \$9,000  
Oceanfront 2B \$14,500  
1B Oceanfront \$8,500

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(renovated)  
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p/week  
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Weeks 5,6,7sun-sun  
3 Bedroom Condo Unit 3548  
Week 8 sun-sun  
**Mini enhanced rooms**  
1 bedroom first floor unit 1570  
weeks 7 & 8 fri-fri  
2 bedroom first floor unit 1566  
weeks 5 & 6 fri-fri  
1 bedroom 5th floor unit 5562  
week 17  
Email: [cljhn@aol.com](mailto:cljhn@aol.com)  
Tel: 297-566-4608

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**Casa del Mar**  
wk 3 Room 1511  
\$20.000  
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201072

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wk 2 ocean front  
Room 1224...25K  
wk 3 ocean, pool view Room  
1318...20K  
e-mail: [lemmesell@aol.com](mailto:lemmesell@aol.com)

201071

**DOCTOR ON DUTY**  
**Oranjestad**  
Dr. Habibe

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POLIS	100
POLIS	581-1100
ORANJESTAD	582-4000
NOORD	587-0009
STA. CRUZ	585-4710
SAVANETA	584-7000
SAN NICOLAS	584-5000
FIRE DEPT.	115
FIRE DEPT.	582-1108
POLIS TIPLINE	11141
HOSPITAL	527-4000
AMBULANCE	582-1234
SAN NICOLAS	
AMBULANCE	584-5050

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S. NICOLAS: San Lucas Tel: 584-5119

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TAXI	582-5900
TAXI-TAS	587-5900
PROF. TAXI	588-0035
TAXI D.T.S.	587-2300
SERVICE ARUBA	583-3232

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**Coral Princess**

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Avianca	588-0059
Dutch Antilles	588-1900
Insel Air	588-9314
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Arubano  
Tel: 583-3808  
Narcotics Anonymous  
Tel: 583-8989

## Foundation Amor

pa Prohimo  
Tel: 583-3345 /586-6976

## Women in Difficulties

Foundation  
Tel: 583-5400

Bloodbank Aruba  
Tel: 587-0002

Tel: 582-0697 / 583-7484  
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# Scientists: Americans are becoming weather wimps

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**

AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) --

We've become weather wimps. As the world warms, the United States is getting fewer bitter cold spells like the one that gripped much of the nation this week. So when a deep freeze strikes, scientists say, it seems more unprecedented than it really is. An Associated Press analysis of the daily national winter temperature shows that cold extremes have happened about once every four years since 1900.

Until recently.

When computer models estimated that the national average daily temperature for the Lower 48 states dropped to 17.9 degrees on Monday, it was the first deep freeze of that magnitude in 17 years, according to Greg Carbin, warning meteorologist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. That stretch - from Jan. 13, 1997 to Monday - is by far the longest the U.S. has gone without the national average plunging below 18 degrees, according to a database of daytime winter temperatures starting in January 1900.

In the past 115 years, there have been 58 days when the national average temperature dropped below 18. Carbin said those occurrences often happen in periods that last several days so it makes more sense to talk about cold outbreaks instead of cold days. There have been 27 distinct cold snaps.

Between 1970 and 1989, a dozen such events occurred, but there were only two in the 1990s and then none until Monday.

"These types of events have actually become



In this Sunday, Jan. 5, 2014, file photo, a person struggles to cross a street in blowing and falling snow as the Gateway Arch appears in the distance, in St. Louis.

Associated Press

more infrequent than they were in the past," said Carbin, who works at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla. "This is why there was such a big buzz because people have such short memories."

Said Jeff Masters, meteorology director of the private firm Weather Underground: "It's become a lot harder to get these extreme (cold) outbreaks in a planet that's warming."

And Monday's breathtaking chill? It was merely the 55th coldest day - averaged for the continental United States - since 1900. The coldest day for the Lower 48 since 1900 - as calculated by the computer models - was 12 degrees on Christmas Eve 1983,

nearly 6 degrees chillier than Monday.

The average daytime winter temperature is about 33 degrees, according to Carbin's database.

There have been far more unusually warm winter days in the U.S. than unusu-

ally cold ones.

Since Jan. 1, 2000, only two days have ranked in the top 100 coldest: Monday and Tuesday. But there have been 13 in the top 100 warmest winter days, including the warmest since 1900: Dec. 3, 2012. And that pattern is exactly what climate scientists have been saying for years, that the world will get more warm extremes and fewer cold extremes.

Nine of 11 outside climate scientists and meteorologists who reviewed the data for the AP said it showed that as the world warms from heat-trapping gas spewed by the burning of fossil fuels, winters are becoming milder. The world is getting more warm extremes and fewer cold extremes, they said.

"We expect to see a lengthening of time between cold air outbreaks due to a warming climate, but 17 years between outbreaks is probably partially due to an unusual amount of natural variability," or luck, Masters said in an email. "I expect we'll go far fewer than 17 years before seeing the next cold air outbreak of this intensity. And the scientists dismiss global warming skeptics who claim one or two cold days somehow disproves

climate change.

"When your hands are freezing off trying to scrape the ice off your car, it can be all too tempting to say, 'Where's global warming now? I could use a little of that!' But you know what? It's not as cold as it used to be anymore," Texas Tech University climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe said in an email.

The recent cold spell, which was triggered by a frigid air mass known as the polar vortex that wandered way south of normal, could also be related to a relatively new theory that may prove a weather wild card, said Rutgers University climate scientist Jennifer Francis. Her theory, which has divided mainstream climate scientists, says that melting Arctic sea ice is changing polar weather, moving the jet stream and causing "more weirdness."

Ryan Maue, a meteorologist with the private firm Weather Bell Analytics who is skeptical about blaming global warming for weather extremes, dismisses Francis' theory and said he has concerns about the accuracy of Carbin's database. Maue has his own daily U.S. average temperature showing that Monday was colder than Carbin's calculations. □

## Northern lights may expand south next couple days

WASHINGTON (AP) — Northerners thawing out from a bitter freeze may get rewarded with shimmering northern lights the next couple days.

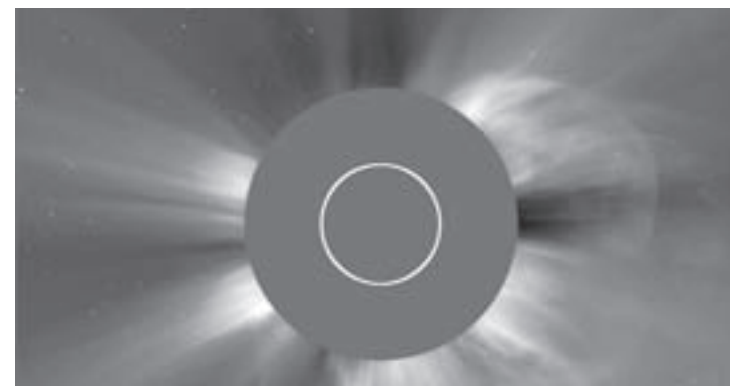
U.S. space weather forecaster Joe Kunches said the sun shot out a strong solar flare late Tuesday, which should arrive at Earth early Thursday. It should shake up Earth's magnetic field and expand the Aurora Borealis south. He said best viewing would probably be Thursday evening, weather permitting.

The University of Alaska's Geophysical Institute predicts much of Canada

and the northern fringes of the U.S. should see the northern lights.

The solar storm is already

diverting airline flights around the poles and may disrupt GPS positioning devices Thursday. □



In this Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2014 image made available by NASA, a giant cloud of solar particles, a coronal mass ejection, explodes off the sun, lower right, captured by the European Space Agency and NASA's Solar and Heliospheric Observatory.

Associated Press

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## OWN orders another Tyler Perry series

This photo released by Harpo Studios shows Tyler Perry, left, and Oprah Winfrey, during the show, "Oprah Fridays Live."

Associated Press

PASADENA, California (AP)

— Producer Tyler Perry will soon have a fourth series on Oprah Winfrey's OWN network.

OWN said Thursday that it has ordered a Perry drama, "Single Moms Club," that will premiere this fall. It's about a group of mothers who create a support group after being brought together by an incident at their children's school.

The success of Perry's series keyed a turnaround for OWN, which struggled at its start. The drama "The Haves and the Have Nots" began its second season last week, and the comedy "Love Thy Neighbor" began its second season on Wednesday.

OWN also airs the Perry comedy "For Better or Worse." □

## Reunited OutKast, Arcade Fire, Muse head Coachella

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Rap duo OutKast is reuniting to headline the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in April, ending a half-decade hiatus for one of hip-hop's most popular and important acts.

OutKast joins Arcade Fire and Muse as headliners for the festival that plays over two weekends in California. Other acts scheduled include Pharrell Williams, Beck, Queens of the Stone Age and Lorde. The reunited The Replacements also will appear.

Andre "Andre 3000" Benjamin and Antwan "Big Boi" Patton came out of Atlanta with a unique sound two decades ago and became one of rap's top-selling and most-praised acts, winning the Grammy Award for album of the year for double album



This Aug. 11, 2006 file photo shows musicians Andre Benjamin, right, and Big Boi, of the musical group OutKast in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

"Speakerboxx/The Love Below." They have not released an album as OutKast since 2006's "Idlewild," a soundtrack. □

## David Bowie up for 2 prizes at UK's Brit Awards

LONDON (AP) — Musical chameleon David Bowie is starting the year with two nominations for Britain's leading music awards, the Brits.

Bowie, who turned 67 on Wednesday, is up for male British artist of the year and album of the year, for his first release in a decade, "The Next Day."

Electronic duo Disclosure and rock band Bastille have four nominations apiece for the prizes, while drum 'n' bass quartet Rudimental and singer Ellie Goulding each have three. World-conquering boy band One Direction has two nominations, for British single and British group.

Nominees in the international categories, announced Thursday, include Drake, Eminem, Bruno Mars, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis and Arcade



In this Oct. 25, 2007 file photo, David Bowie arrives at the Fourth Annual Black Ball Concert for "Keep A Child Alive" in New York.

Associated Press

Fire.

The awards, Britain's equivalent of the Grammys, will be handed out in a concert-style ceremony at London's O2 Arena on Feb. 19 featuring performances

by Arctic Monkeys, Bastille and Perry.

Most winners are decided by a ballot of some 1,000 music-industry members, and several are decided by public vote. □

## Activist poet-playwright Amiri Baraka dies at 79

HILLEL ITALIE

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Amiri Baraka, the militant man of letters and tireless agitator whose blues-based, fist-shaking poems, plays and criticism made him a provocative and groundbreaking force in American culture, has died. He was 79. His booking agent, Celeste Bateman, told The Associated Press that Baraka, who had been hospitalized since last month, died Thursday at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. Perhaps no writer of the 1960s and '70s was more radical or polarizing than the former LeRoi Jones, and no one did more to extend the political debates of the civil rights era to the world of the arts. He inspired at least one generation of poets, playwrights and musicians, and his immersion in spoken word traditions and raw street

language anticipated rap, hip-hop and slam poetry. The FBI feared him to the point of flattery, identifying Baraka as "the person who will probably emerge as the leader of the Pan-African movement in the United States."

Baraka transformed from the rare black to join the Beat caravan of Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac to leader of the Black Arts Movement, an ally of the Black Power movement that rejected the liberal optimism of the early '60s and intensified a divide over how and whether the black artist should take on social issues. Scorning art for art's sake and the pursuit of black-white unity, Baraka was part of a philosophy that called for the teaching of black art and history and producing works that bluntly called for revolution.

"We want 'poems that



This Oct. 2, 2002 file photo shows Amiri Baraka, New Jersey's poet laureate during a ceremony at the Newark Public Library in Newark, N.J. Baraka, a Beat poet, black nationalist and Marxist revolutionary known for his blues-based, fist-shaking manifestos, died, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014, at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in Newark, N.J. at age 79.

Associated Press

kill," Baraka wrote in his landmark "Black Art," a manifesto published in 1965, the year he helped found the Black Arts Movement. □



## Golden Globes-Preview

# Keaton, Formula 1 driver among Globes surprises

**SANDY COHEN**

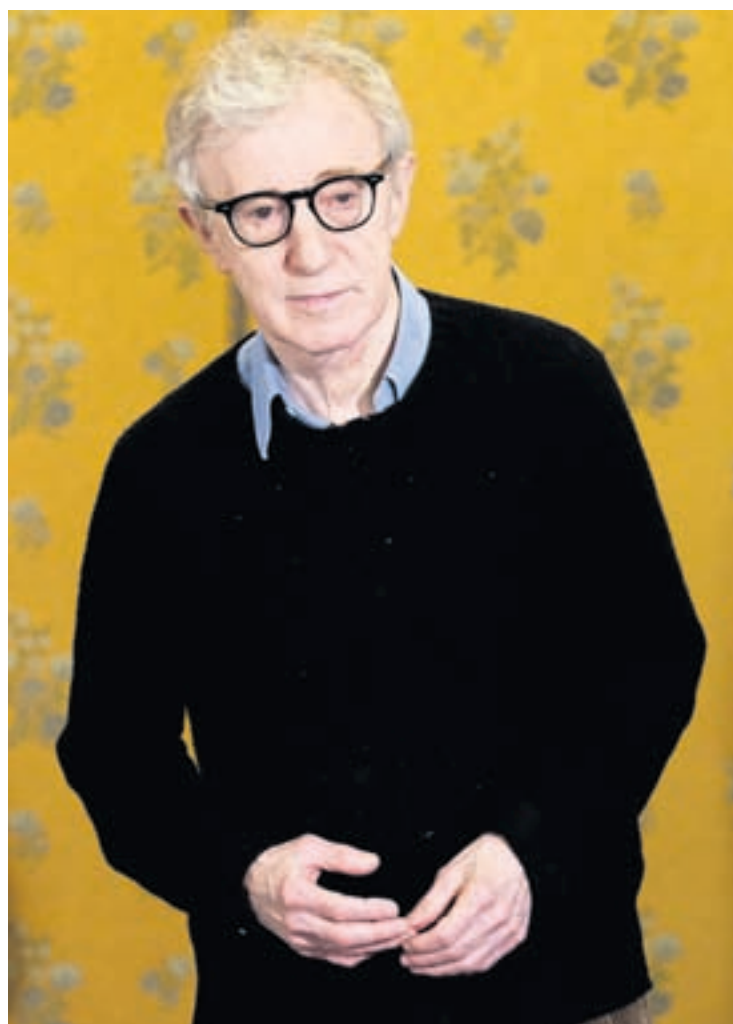
**AP Entertainment Writer  
BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)**

— If Woody Allen attends the Golden Globe Awards, he'd rival Bill Clinton as its biggest surprise guest. Allen will receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award at Sunday's ceremony. The writer-director famously avoids awards shows, though, and skipped those for his previous 12 Golden Globe nominations.

"We've read that Woody's not going to be here," said executive producer Barry Adelman, who kept Clinton's appearance under wraps until airtime last year. "We've heard rumors there may be some surprises." Though the 71st annual Golden Globes are just days away, the show is still coming together.

Sounds of buzzing drills and beeping scissor lifts fill the Beverly Hilton's International Ballroom, where workers are busy hanging chandeliers, assembling a stage and installing some of the 18 cameras that will capture the starry action on show night.

Apart from Allen, most of the stars supplying that action are confirmed: Emma Stone, the lead of Allen's



**This April 13, 2012 file photo shows director and actor Woody Allen at the photo call of the movie "To Rome with Love", in Rome. Allen will receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award at Sunday's Golden Globe ceremony.**  
**Associated Press**

latest film, will present his DeMille award, and Diane Keaton "is going to join in," Adelman said. Chris Hemsworth and Formula One driver Niki Lauda will intro-

duce best picture nominee "Rush." Laura Dern will present best picture nominee "Nebraska," which stars her dad, best actor candidate Bruce Dern.

Kyra Sedgwick and Kevin Bacon will introduce their daughter, Sosie Bacon, who's serving as this year's Miss Golden Globe.

Other presenters announced this week include Tom Hanks, Melissa McCarthy, Channing Tatum, Jennifer Lawrence, Reese Witherspoon, Robert Downey, Jr., Mark Ruffalo and Emma Watson.

With such a high celebrity quotient, there's a great image in every lens, said Globes director Louis J. Horvitz, who will call the shots broadcast worldwide from a giant truck parked behind the Beverly Hilton. Tina Fey and Amy Poehler return as hosts for a second time after winning raves and ratings last year. They work without restriction with their own writing teams, Adelman said. His first look at their material will be Friday. They also write and improvise throughout the show. When Clinton left the stage last year, Poehler quipped: "Wasn't that Hillary Clinton's husband?" "That was a total ad-lib," Adelman said.

Leading nominees this year are the con-artist caper "American Hustle" and historical drama "12 Years

A Slave." Each has seven bids, including best picture, director and actor.

Besides "12 Years A Slave," directed by Steve McQueen, other contenders in the best dramatic film category include the Somali-pirate thriller "Captain Phillips," racing story "Rush," space adventure "Gravity" and the family tale "Philomena."

David O. Russell's "American Hustle" is joined in the best musical or comedy film category by the computer love story "Her," road movie "Nebraska," folk-musician story "Inside Llewyn Davis" and Martin Scorsese's romp through greed and excess, "The Wolf of Wall Street."

For best TV series, the dramatic nominees are "Breaking Bad," "Downton Abbey," "The Good Wife," "House of Cards" and "Masters of Sex." Comedy contenders are "The Big Bang Theory," "Brooklyn Nine-Nine," "Girls," "Modern Family" and Poehler's "Parks and Recreation."

The Golden Globe Awards, voted on and presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, will air live on NBC from 8-11 p.m. EST on Sunday. □



**Jason Aldean announces his "Burn It Down" tour which will include stops at several Major League Baseball stadiums, on Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014 in New York.**  
**Associated Press**

**MESFIN FEKADU  
AP Music Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Jason Aldean is heading to the centerfield. The country star is partnering with Major League Baseball to launch a 50-date tour this spring that will include stops at Na-

tionals Park in Washington, D.C., and Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia. The "Burn It Down Tour" will kick off May 1 in Roanoke, Va. "For me, it doesn't seem like that long ago we were playing little clubs," the 36-year-old said in an interview Thursday at the MLB

## Aldean announces 50-date tour with stadium visits

offices in New York City. "So, to go from playing small bars and clubs that weren't even sold out to now going in and selling out these stadiums ... to me, it's pretty overwhelming sometimes, but I love it." Aldean, who will also play arenas on the tour, will visit stadiums in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. More shows will be announced at a later date.

The stadium stage isn't new for Aldean: He played Fenway Park in Boston and the University of Georgia's Sanford Stadium last year. "When you play a stadium, you attack it the way you attack any other show. You still want to give peo-

ple the best show you can give them," he said.

Aldean, who released his debut in 2005, is riding high off the success of 2010's triple platinum "My Kinda Party" and 2012's platinum "Night Train."

"Night Train," his fifth album, is nominated for best country album at the Grammy Awards on Jan. 26. The record will battle efforts from Taylor Swift, Blake Shelton, Tim McGraw and newcomer Kasey Musgraves.

"You look at all the other artists that could have been (nominated) and you're one of a handful — especially me for an album (award) because

that's something that I put a lot of time into," he said. "If we win it, we do, if we don't, we don't. That's one thing I've tried not to worry about over the years."

He said if he does win the prize, he'll take it on the road for his stadium tour. Florida Georgia Line, the country duo that had one of last year's top songs with the Nelly-assisted remix of "Cruise," will join Aldean on the road. Tyler Farr will also open for Aldean, and Miranda Lambert will play select dates.

"She puts on a great show. I was always like, 'If I was a female act, that's what I would do,'" Aldean said. "She just tears it up." □



## The Edamame Economy



DAVID BROOKS  
© 2014 New York Times

In the age of rail, luxury hotels mimicked European palaces. When rich people arrived at their destination, they wanted to be treated like nobility.

Then in the age of the jet, a new sort of hotel emerged, sleek Hiltons and Sheratons. These hotels offered the comfort of familiarity. You could go around the world and the hotels were largely the same. They were efficient and bland, offering quality service and ease of movement. A business traveler could stay in one of these hotels for days and barely notice anything about the place. The computer age has brought yet another new kind of hotel: the mass boutique.

Boutique hotels started in the early 1980s in London, with Blakes, and in San Francisco, with the Bedford. These hotels had entirely different goals than the big hotels at the time. Instead of offering familiarity, they offered difference. Instead of offering beige, they offered edginess, art, emotion and a dollop of pretension.

The first boutique hotels were founded by entrepreneurs who seemed more like rock producers or psych professors than corporate executives. Chip Conley founded Joie de Vivre Hospitality in the Bay Area when he was 26. He designed his hotel Phoenix around the personality of Rolling Stone magazine. He later organized his business strategy around Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

At the bottom of the pyramid, Conley's hotels offer a comfortable bed, but at the top of the pyramid, Conley says that his hotels offer "identity refreshment" and "mass therapy." As he writes in his book "Peak," "If we get it right at our boutique hotels, we don't just satisfy our guests' physiological, safety, social and esteem needs: We bring them an awareness of self-actualization." Boutiques cater to the sort of affluent consumer who is produced by the information economy, which rewards education with money. This is a consumer who is prouder of his cultural discernment than his corporate success; who feels interested in, rather than intimidated by, a hotel room stuffed with cultural signifiers - cerulean sofas or Steichen photos.

Boutique hotels hold up a flattering mirror. When guests arrive, they are supposed to feel like they are entering an edgy com-

munity of unconventional, discerning people like themselves. In an age when Hotels.com and Travelocity turn hotel rooms into commodities, these are customers who are willing to pay extra, sometimes a lot extra, for a hotel with sensibility. The boutique Soho Grand in New York is currently offering rooms at \$339 a night. The Hilton Garden Inn, a very adequate hotel a couple of blocks away, is charging \$139. Painfully hip boutique hotels used to seem like a fad, but they've spread and spread. Over the past few years, they have gone mass. Starwood has planted large, boutiquey W hotels on five continents. Hyatt has Andaz. And as Brooks Barnes reported in the Times' most recent Sunday Business section, Marriott is creating a chain of mass boutiques, called Edition. When Marriott enters the boutique business, everybody has entered the boutique business.

It seems as if there is an endless supply of middle-class consumers who have boutique identities and aspirations, especially among people in their 20s. Consumers now use hotels differently. They bring their laptops down to the lobby rather than working in their rooms. Fewer people bother to unpack their bags. Therefore, room desks and closets are less important, but having a happening lobby scene is more important. People need a civic space where they can have their contiguous but individualized iPad experiences.

Boutique hotels are, on one level, kind of ridiculous. They are almost invariably too dark throughout, making it hard to read. The bed is often too low. The bathroom door is sometimes a flimsy sliding shutter, sacrificing privacy for style.

But they do exemplify a shift in the consumer market, which you might call the shift from the lima bean economy to the edamame economy. It's easy to forget how much more boring the marketplace was a few decades ago - more boring cuisine, more boring restaurants, more boring hotels. Recently, there's been a creative brand explosion, to go along with nichification and segmentation. Companies are much more interested in creating emotional arousal. Hotels, sneakers, iced tea and even ice cream are now marketed to people on the basis of psychographic profiles and the result is a profusion of unusual products and distinctive experiences. Consumers have been educated by the market and now the median level of cultural competence is much higher.

A basic rule of happiness is don't buy things; buy experiences. The market has taken one commodity product after another and turned it into an emotional experience - even hotel stays. I don't know how you measure how much better off we are because of that, but we are significantly better off. The world's a sweeter place when, for an extra 200 bucks a night, you can lodge like Afrojack. □



## Bridge Over Troubled Politics



GAIL COLLINS  
© 2014 New York Times

We have been through a lot of political scandals. But never before has the nation been roiled by a conspiracy to create a traffic jam.

There's barely been time to get used to the idea that Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey is a Republican presidential contender. Now we're going to have to wonder if he's a Republican presidential contender who would deliberately create a monster four-day-long backup on the George Washington Bridge to punish a Democratic mayor for not endorsing his re-election. "Time for some traffic problems in Fort Lee," emailed a Christie deputy chief of staff last summer. Suddenly, commuters were seeing two, three, four hours added to their drive times.

This is very big. Voters have been known to overlook financial chicanery or stuffed ballot boxes. They might continue to love a guy who screwed up the local bond rating or got evicted from the governor's mansion by an irate wife. But could you ever trust a politician who was implicated in a deliberate effort to ruin rush hour?

We are, of course, going to refer to this as Bridgegate. Also, we will try to figure out some way to call it a political polar vortex.

One central character in the story - which unfolds in newly public emails and texts - is David Wild-

stein, the governor's high school pal and a former mayor of their mutual hometown who was appointed to a very important position in the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The Port Authority controls the George Washington Bridge, which carries more motor vehicles than any other span in the world. In September, Wildstein had workers block off two access lanes to the bridge from Fort Lee, N.J. This appears to have been an effort to get back at the mayor for his failure to join the governor's re-election team.

Imagine what would happen if the mayor of Tijuana did something to tick off a President Chris Christie administration. Goodbye border crossing.

"The lowest level of political venom that you could possibly even make up," Mayor Mark Sokolich fumed to CNN on Wednesday. In an email, Wildstein referred to the mayor as "this little Serbian." Sokolich has described himself as both outraged and Croatian.

America has not been this conscious of Fort Lee since the early days of Weekend Update on "Saturday Night Live," when Gilda Radner played correspondent Roseanne Roseannadanna, continually answering questions from "Mr. Richard Feder of Fort Lee, N.J." Now we are imagining Mr. Richard Feder on his morning commute to Manhattan, sitting behind the wheel and staring bleakly ahead as the clock ticks on toward 10 a.m.

Emergency services complained about delays. Children were trapped on buses en route to the first day of school. Meanwhile, the texting by the Christie camp went along the line of: "Is it wrong that I am smiling?" One of them expressed some mild regret about the kids. Wildstein pointed out that they were probably the spawn of Democrats.

Nothing in the newly uncovered email exchanges came directly from Christie. Perhaps he did not know what was going on. Per-

haps Christie, the chairman of the Republican Governors Association, appointed childhood chum and political blogger Wildstein to the Port Authority because of his in-depth expertise in bridges and tunnels. On Wednesday, Christie declared in a brief statement that he was shocked, shocked, shocked and was determined to hold people "responsible for their actions." He has apparently dropped his earlier position that the whole blocked-lane thing was probably a useful study of traffic patterns.

"There's a difference between a Jersey attitude of being blunt and direct and telling it like it is, and a Nixonesque act of retaliation that punishes innocent people," said Loretta Weinberg, the majority leader of the state Senate who represents Fort Lee.

The nation first met Weinberg, 78, when Christie winningly urged reporters to "take the bat out on her for once."

Republicans around the nation are going to be brought up short by an idea of a plot to screw up our constitutional right to drive to work. Among the great political divides in this country is mass transit versus cars, and Republicans tend to be rather hostile toward the former. (Driving is individualistic; buses are communal. Driving is the wide open spaces; trains are sort of France.)

Also, they're going to wonder if we really need more people in Washington with no sense of discretion when it comes to the stuff they say on the Internet. Or who suffer from serious problems with proportionality. The governor won re-election with more than 60 percent of the vote. Obsessing over one Democratic mayor's failure to jump on board is right up there with Martha Stewart's attempt to save her financial empire \$45,000 through a gambit that netted her five months in prison.

I am really looking forward to hearing all this discussed in the Florida primary. □



# Hot Buns: Danish cinnamon rolls too spicy for EU rules

**JAN M. OLSEN**  
**Associated Press**  
**COPENHAGEN, Denmark**  
**(AP)** — Easy on the cinnamon! That advice from Denmark's food authority has rankled pastry chefs

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration recently discovered that Danish cinnamon rolls and twists contained more coumarin — a chemical compound in the most com-

mon variety of cinnamon — than EU rules allow. Excessive intake of coumarin can cause liver damage. So the agency asked Danish bakers to reduce the amount of cinnamon they sprinkle in the dough for sweet treats like the "kanel-snegel" (cinnamon roll)

saying the EU limit is too strict, and would make it hard, if not impossible, to make their cherished pastries.

"A grown man like me could eat like 10 'kanel-snegle' every day for several years and not even get near the limit of what's dangerous to my liver," said Anders Grabow, a spokesman for the Danish Bakers' Association. "I would probably get too much sugar in my body before that."

The EU limit for so-called "fine baked goods" is set at 15 milligrams of coumarin per kilogram of pastry. The Danish agency found last year that more than half of the 74 food samples it took from bakeries, supermarkets and importers contained more coumarin than that.

The Danish bakers noted that their colleagues in neighboring Sweden can get away with more than three times as much coumarin in their cinnamon rolls because food authorities there classify them as "traditional and seasonal bakery" for which EU rules are less strict.

The Danish food agency

didn't use that classification because it didn't consider the "kanel-snegle" as a pastry sold primarily for Christmas or other holidays, said agency spokesman Henrik Nielsen.

Officials will meet with the bakers' association next month to review which baked goods can be considered seasonal or traditional, he said.

"When someone challenges people's craftsmanship, it may get emotional," Nielsen said. But, he added, "we want the industry to respect existing rules."

EU spokesman Frederic Vincent said it's up to authorities in member countries to enforce EU legislation and that the bloc's commission in Brussels isn't about to ban any Scandinavian pastry.

However, he said, the Commission would be ready to help Swedish and Danish authorities upon request "to find a common interpretation that complies with the EU legislation, adequately protects Danish and Swedish (and other European consumers) and does not disrupt the EU internal market." □



Cinnamon rolls are displayed at a bakery in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration recently found that Danish bakers use more cinnamon in their pastry than the recommended limits set by the EU.

(AP Photo/Per Folkver)

whose cinnamon rolls were found to violate the European Union's spice rules.

mon variety of cinnamon — than EU rules allow. Excessive intake of coumarin

and "kanelstang" (cinnamon twist).

Danish bakers protested,

# American food companies cut 6.4 trillion calories

**MARY CLARE JALONICK**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Some of the largest U.S. food companies have cut more than 6.4 trillion calories from their products as part of a fight against obesity, according to a new study.

The study sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found between 2007 and 2012 the companies reduced their products' calories by the equivalent of around 78 calories per person per day. Seventy-eight calories would be about the same as an average cookie or a medium apple, and the federal government estimates an average daily diet at around 2,000 calories. The study said the calories cut averaged out to 78 calories per day for the entire U.S. population.

The 2010 pledge taken by 16 companies — including

General Mills Inc., Campbell Soup Co., ConAgra Foods Inc., Kraft Foods Inc., Kellogg Co., Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo Inc. and Hershey Co. — was to cut 1 trillion calories by 2012 and 1.5 trillion calories by 2015.

The companies are part of an industry coalition of food businesses called the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation that has organized to help reduce obesity. The foundation pledged to reduce the calories as part of an agreement with a group of nonprofit organizations and made the 2010 announcement as part of first lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign to combat childhood obesity.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation signed on to hold the companies accountable, and that group hired researchers at the University of North Carolina

at Chapel Hill to painstakingly count the calories in almost every single packaged item in the grocery store.

ceeded their own goals by a wide margin.

Dr. James Marks, director of the Health Group at the Robert Wood Johnson

they've pledged to do, and other food companies should follow their lead."

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is a nonpartisan philanthropic and research organization that works to improve the nation's health.

Even though the companies that made the commitment represent most of the nation's most well-known food companies, they sold only around a third of all packaged foods and beverages at the beginning of the study. Missing are many off-label brands sold under the names of retailers, and it's unknown whether those products have changed.

It is also unclear how the reduction in calories translates into consumers' diets. Many products now come in lower calorie versions, are baked instead of fried, or sold in miniature as well as larger versions. □



The nutrition information is shown on the back of a Campbell's Chicken Noodle soup can in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2014. Some of the nation's largest food companies have cut their calories by the trillions according to a new study.

(AP Photo/J. David Ake)

The researchers aren't yet releasing the entire study, but they said Thursday that the companies have ex-

Foundation, said the group is pleased with the results but the companies "must sustain that reduction, as